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MATER ADMIRABILIS.

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MATER ADMIRABILIS

A HAND-BOOK

OF

INSTRUCTION ON THE POWER AND PRE-  
ROGATIVES

OF

OUR BLESSED LADY

BY

REV. C. O'BRIEN, D. D.

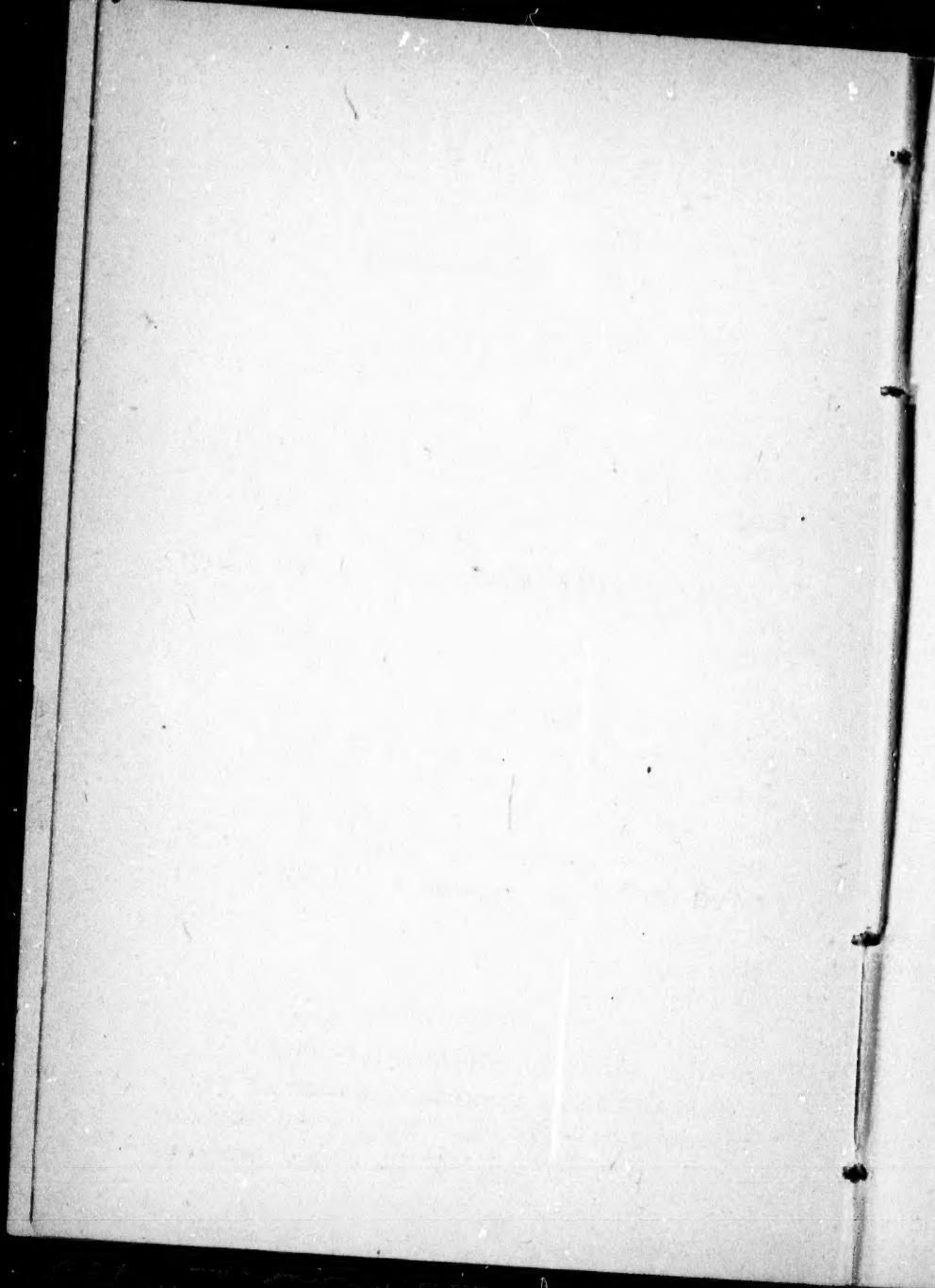


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## PREFACE.

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The object of this little work is to propagate devotion to our loving Mother, the Queen of Heaven. But devotion, to be enduring and deep, must be founded on knowledge of the excellence of the being to whom we are devout. Emotional piety may exist without any very definite knowledge ; but it is scarcely fitted to live in the bustle of every day life. If, however, the intellect be taught the why, and wherefore, of a practise of piety, its reasonableness and the benefits to be derived therefrom, we may fairly hope that contact with the world will not destroy that devotion.

There are many books in every language which treat of the Blessed Virgin. So far as our observation goes they consist of large dogmatic works, or small manuals of piety. The former are suitable only for scholars, or at most, persons

who have time, money and a fair education: the latter are not always calculated to give the instruction necessary to render piety *intellectual*, as well as emotional.

In this little work we have endeavoured to give the dogma, so to speak, of devotion to our Lady, in simple and concise language; then practical devotion, in its more popular forms, is explained, and its benefits pointed out. Our wish has been to make the book useful to all. Even the learned may find, we hope, something worth reading.

At first we merely intended writing a short pamphlet for our parishioners; but the work grew upon us, and we fain would have prolonged it.

To any facts related in this book which have not yet been judged by the Holy See, we protest that we do not mean to give any other credence than that which is founded on human authority; and we submit everything to the Holy Roman Church.

INDIAN RIVER, MAY DAY 1882.

## DEDICATION.

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To Our Earthly Mother  
To whom we owe much  
This Little Work  
In honour of  
Our Heavenly Mother  
To whom we owe more  
Is lovingly inscribed

THE AUTHOR.



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## CHAPTER I.

### THE BLESSED VIRGIN'S PLACE IN CREATION.

It is the peculiar property of true Faith, or a true system of Religion, to satisfy the intellect and the heart of man. The cultured and the ignorant are alike happy in the teachings of the Catholic Church. There is nothing vague, nor uncertain in our belief ; there is nothing strained in sense ; there is nothing illogical in our conclusions. Each great fact of the biblical narrative has its proper place in the scheme of Creation and Redemption ; it is not a fortuitous event, for it was foreseen and intended by God ; it is not in contradiction to any other, for all are harmonious units of the same eternal plan. The various parts of a well executed design do not conspire more judiciously to form a finished whole, than do the facts of Revelation to form a beautiful and coherent system of religious belief. Those

who are in possession of the true Faith are satisfied in intellect ; their minds rest in the full light of truth.

This rest is misunderstood by those who are not so fortunate as to have the gift of Faith. It is often looked upon as stupidity, or ignorance. Those who are separated from us in religion, are ever unquiet in mind. The good yearn for something, they know not what ; they long for a peace which eludes their pursuit : the indifferent and bad are credulous to every absurdity and vain superstition, and incredulous only in regard to the Catholic Church.

Souls that long to do right must remember that only one system of belief can be true ; and that system must be consistent and logical. There may be some truths in every form of worship, but only one can have the fulness of the Divine Deposit. Moreover no sacrifice is too great to make for God.

It is worthy of remark that every heresy has mistaken the place of the Blessed Virgin. Widely as ancient heresies differ from modern ones, they have all this one note in common. The early Church knew

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no more efficacious way of crushing out the gross errors of Nestorius and Eutychius than that of proclaiming Mary "the Mother of God," as was done at the Council of Ephesus. All the heresies of the first five centuries may be reduced to two; the one, that of the *Docetes* who denied the humanity of Christ; the other, that of the *Ebionites* who denied his Divinity. Against the latter St. John wrote his Gospel to show that our Saviour was truly God, as well as man. These two leading errors have been modified, and mixed up, and revived, during the course of centuries until our own day. It speaks badly for the inventive genius of mis-believers that their heresies now are the old ones, confuted and anathematized by St. John, and the earliest writers of our Church. But so it is. The fashionable error of the day,—the one affected by many scientists, and their obsequious imitators, is to look upon our divine Redeemer as a great and good man, a pure moralist and philanthropist, and nothing more. It is only a stupid revival of the Ebionite error, decked out in the pompous phraseology of modern infidelity.

Let any one calmly consider the present state of "Religion" outside of the Catholic Church, and such one will see that, with few exceptions, the true nature of the Incarnation is misunderstood, when not denied. The ineffable union of God and man, in one person,—real humanity and real Divinity, united but not confused,—a being whose Father is the Eternal God, and yet who is truly the Son of a Virgin, has ever been a stumbling block to the uncircumcised of heart. And yet, this is the keystone of the Christian Religion. It is therefore of the utmost importance to understand it aright.

As already said, the early Church confuted the various forms of error, on this head, by defining the place of the Blessed Virgin. When St. John wrote: "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt amongst us," he necessarily proclaimed Mary the Mother of God. His disciple, St. Ignatius the martyr, tells us that in Christ there "is both humanity and Divinity; that he took flesh from Mary, and his Divinity is from God"<sup>(1)</sup>. Here, also, the Divine ma-

(1) Ep. ad. Ephs., c. 7.

ternity of the Blessed Virgin is shown forth. It is needless to multiply quotations : so permeated was the early Church with this truth that St. Gregory of Nazianzum wrote in the fourth century : " He who does not profess Holy Mary Mother of God does not recognize the Divinity. If any one should say that Christ was not formed in the womb of the Virgin in a divine as well as in a human manner... he is equally an atheist " (1). And Julian the Apostate complained : " You do not cease to call Mary the Mother of God."

We could cite texts from every Holy Father of the Church to prove this belief ; but enough has been said to answer our purpose. It can be seen at once that the Blessed Virgin is not an accidental part of Creation ; she is not a matter of indifference in the Christian Religion. We cannot shut our eyes to her incomparable dignity ; we cannot cast her down from that lofty throne on which the Almighty has placed her. If we pass her by with a sneer, we either deny the Divinity of Christ, or we offer an insult to his Mother.

(1) Labbe Conc. Ephs.



It is surely dreadful to do either. And yet, thousands, unthinkingly let us hope, do this every day. Thousands who claim to be Christians will either ignore her altogether, or coldly speak of her as "Mary," and deny that she is worthy of honour. It is a strange fact, and a sad one.

In the scheme of Creation the Blessed Virgin holds a central place. God saw the fall of Adam ; he saw the Incarnation of his Eternal Son ; consequently he had the Blessed Virgin before his eyes from all eternity. Take away the Virgin, and there is no Incarnation, no Redemption, no Christian Religion. Take her away, and man would be ever the slave of Satan : his life would be a wild tumult, without hope, or guiding star ; blindly he would be tossed about, for a few dreary years, in hopeless agony, and then his soul would be sullenly cast on the dark shores of hell, "piled up with living damned" as thick as pebbles. This is not fancy ; it is the literal truth. Without the Blessed Virgin there would have been no Incarnation. God could have redeemed us in another way, but since he chose to do it

through the means of the Incarnation and death of our Saviour, we can in all truth say,—without the Blessed Virgin there would be no Redemption. We may well apply to her the words of Wisdom : “ All good came to me with her.”

Let the soul that desires to please God reflect well on this. Let pride and prejudice be laid aside, and the wonderful work of our Redemption contemplated. We owe it all to Christ, it is true ; only He is the Victim and the Sacrifice. This the Catholic Church holds and teaches. But does not the Blessed Virgin take a central place in the scheme of Creation and Redemption? Without her, it could not have been with us as it has been. We cannot, even if we would, disown her ; we cannot cease to be indebted to her ; we cannot thrust her aside without, at the same time, thrusting aside Jesus. If we thoroughly understand what she is, we can readily see the errors which attack the divinity of Christ.

We may conclude with the words of St. Cyril : “ If the Incarnation is only a figure, if the Virgin is not truly Mother of God, the Word which proceeds from

the Father has not assumed flesh from the seed of Abraham, and has not become like unto his brethren ; and thus, unless Mary be proclaimed Mother of God, the cause of our salvation is destroyed, our Faith is overthrown, and with it perishes the hope of the human race " (1).

(1) Løbbe Conc. Eph. p. 55.

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## CHAPTER II.

### FOUNDATION AND MEASURE OF MARY'S GREATNESS.

No human being fills so large a space in the history of man as the Blessed Virgin. She was foreshadowed by God ere he drove Adam and Eve from Paradise—"I will put enmities between thee and the Woman; and thy seed and her seed: she shall crush thy head"; these are the words of the Almighty giving hope to our fallen race, and casting a beam of Mary's glory down the dark pathway of future ages. Thus early in the world's history the Blessed Virgin is constituted by God a beacon light of hope; her sublime dignity is made known, and she stands forth chartered by her Creator with powers and privileges awful in their incomparable grandeur.

The Prophets had a dim vision of the spiritual beauty of this "daughter of the King," and foretold her coming,—“A

shoot shall go forth from the stem of Jesse, and a flower shall ascend from its root. The "shoot from the stem of Jesse," is the Virgin, and the "flower" our Divine Saviour. David tuned his harp to sing her praises ; and Salomon exhausted his God-given wisdom in vainly trying to enumerate her perfections and gifts. The Archangel Gabriel announced her to mankind as "full of grace"; St. Elizabeth saluted her as, "blessed among women"; the Evangelists recorded for all time her divine motherhood.

Early Christian writers dwell lovingly on her dower of heavenly privileges ; poets offer her their sweetest lays ; painters and sculptors achieve their greatest triumphs of art only to place them at her feet ; writers make her their chosen theme, and, finally, millions on millions of devout souls, through thousands of years proclaim her Blessed. She is not like other heroes, the particular glory of some nation, or century ; her glory is coextensive with the world, and coeval with all time.

Her greatness is, then, undoubted ; her hold on the history and heart of man

beyond all contradiction. Through every age of the Christian era children learned to lisp, in every tongue, the Angel's salutation—"Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee; Blessed art thou among women," and grew to manhood with her sweet image ever present to their minds. The thought of her stayed many a vengeful arm, and checked many a lustful desire. Her sanctity threw a halo of purity around her sex, and gave birth to that chivalrous respect for woman unknown before, and outside of, Christianity.

What, then, is the foundation of this greatness? What is its measure? If we could suppose an intelligent being from another sphere visiting our world, and reading its history, we can well imagine that, on finding traces of the Blessed Virgin on its every page, he should seek to know who, and what she is. We ought to do the same. Whether we like it, or not, the fact is there that she fills an immense space in our history. As intelligent beings, if from no other motive, we ought to endeavour to find the cause of this all-pervading influence of the Blessed Virgin.

The Divine maternity, or her quality of Mother of the Incarnate Word, is the fountain source of Mary's glory, and the reason of her privileges. It is, likewise, the true measure of her greatness.

By the sin of Adam mankind fell from its lofty estate; death entered into the world, and human misery had its origin. The ruin of man became complete; his body was henceforth obnoxious to disease and death; and his soul was fettered by sin. Evil passions burst forth in a torrent from his corrupted blood, and overturned his weakened reason from its throne. Despoiled of innocence, of supernatural graces and gifts, and mortally wounded, the human race lay beneath the feet of Satan, a loathsome sight to God and his Angels. The curse of the Creator fell on the once fruitful earth, and thorns and briars usurped the place of fruit trees and flowers. We are too apt to forget all this; it seems so far off and shadowy to some, and so incredible to others. Yet it is narrated in the Bible, and even human reason can bring strong evidence of its truth. We who live after the Redemption have fallen on happier times; we do not



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see such startling proofs of the direful disaster, and, hence, we are inclined to think but little about it, or perhaps to question its veracity. But only the unthinking can doubt the fall of man.

The traveller who wanders along the borders of lake Thrasymene, or lake of Perugia, in Italy, and gazes on the quiet loveliness of its scenery, is enchanted with its beauty. He admires its sunny knolls rich in their luxuriant verdure; he notes the stillness of its surroundings, and the peace and calm that reign on all sides. He can scarce believe that fierce hosts ever joined in deadly strife on this delightful spot; he smiles at the absurdity of supposing that this place ever resounded with the clash of arms, with shrieks of pain, and groans of agony. He laughs at the historians who tell of 15,000 Romans slain on these shores when Hannibal gained his third victory. The grim horrors of the dreadful carnage which affrighted the rude neighbouring tribes are seen no longer; hence his incredulity. But if he will only dig a few feet down, clear traces of the battle will be unearthed. The smiling, grassy hillocks will reveal

heaps of mouldering human dust, and each dell, now so fair, will be made ghastly with grinning skulls. The healing finger of time has touched and covered many of the traces of that battle ; so, too, the Redemption has cured many of the wounds of our humanity, and hence the unreflecting forget, or deny that they existed. But so surely as the banks of lake Thrasymene, when carefully examined, will still bear witness to the slaughter of long ago ; just so surely will Revelation and the history of mankind prove the fall of Adam, and its dreadful consequences.

Yes ; the human race lay mortally wounded. And it had no hope of recovery. Of itself it could do nothing for its own cure. It had forfeited all right to heaven, all plea for mercy ; all its glorious gifts and privileges had been lost by one act of disobedience. Bitter, indeed, was the fruit of that transgression, and bitter are the consequences of every sin.

When the Almighty beheld the noble work of his loving hand thus defaced by its own act, when he saw his own image and likeness defiled, when he saw free-

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dom of will, given to man as a lofty prerogative among visible creation, used as a means of offending his Majesty, we may well imagine his sorrow and his anger. His almighty arm was uplifted, but love stayed the threatened blow. He saw the stream of corrupted humanity flowing through generations, each more wicked than its predecessor ; he saw the foul vices of the world in its youth, and its refined malice in our day ; but he saw, likewise, a being so lovely, so pure, so heaven-endowed who should be born of the descendants of Adam but who, through a wonderous dispensation of Providence, would be preserved from all taint of corruption, that his kindled wrath was appeased, and man's doom averted.

For God there is no time ; with him there is no past or future. Everything is always present to his divine Intelligence. Hence, from all eternity the Blessed Virgin was ever before God's eyes. The devil had seemed to conquer when Adam fell, but the Omnipotent resolved to rescue his fallen creature. He could have effected his purpose in various ways ;

but he chose the one which should best show his infinite power, and bring man into closer union with himself.

God the Son, the second person of the blessed Trinity, co-eternal with the Father, and equal to him in all things, resolved to become man. That is, he resolved to unite to his Divine Person a body and a soul, like unto ours in all except sin. He would be God and man ; God from all eternity, and man by the assumption of humanity. Through him human nature would be raised to a union with the Divinity ; in him death would be swallowed up in victory. There would be in him two distinct natures ; by him both human and divine operations would be performed ; still there would be but one person, one individual, and that one Divine. His divinity would not be converted into humanity ; but humanity would be assumed by, and hypostatically united to his Divinity. Just as the soul and body, though distinct in nature, unite to form one man, so the divine and human nature would be united to form but one Christ.

This Divine Person, reigning as God

in heaven, would dwell, for a time, among men, teaching them the road to heaven by word and example, and then would be offered as a victim on the Cross, to expiate the sins of our race, and to purchase, by his blood, our souls. This was the loving plan adopted by God to redeem us : this is the correct idea of the Redemption. It was the hope of this which God gave to our first parents when he banished them from Paradise.

Now the flesh which the Son of God was to assume was not to be of a new creation ; it was to be of the seed of Adam, free, however, from the taint of sin. It was necessary, therefore, that he should be born of woman. A creature so pure that of her substance flesh might be formed which would be united to the Divinity, and in whose undefiled bosom a God would be borne, was to be created. That being was the Blessed Virgin ; she was the lovely image of what human nature could be raised to that caught the eye of God in the moment of his wrath.

The Incarnation, then, means that the second person of the Holy Trinity, remaining true God, by an act of omnipo-

tent power, assumed true flesh of the substance of the Blessed Virgin, and in due course was born as truly of her, she remaining a Virgin intact, as are we born of our mothers. Our souls are not produced by our mothers, they are created by God; yet the person composed of body and soul is called the offspring of its mother: the Blessed Virgin did not create, of course, the Divinity; but she truly supplied the flesh which the Divine person assumed; and as he who was born of her is, as we have already shown, true God and true man, she is truly and properly called mother of God. This is the divine maternity, and it is the foundation and measure of our Lady's greatness.

It is undoubted that some part of the virginal body of our Blessed Lady was united hypostatically to the Divinity, both when the overshadowing power of the most High formed, from her substance, the body of Christ, and when that body grew and was nourished ere its birth. It is a well-established principle that the identity of a substance remains through the varying phases of growth and develop-

ment ; hence it is ever true that the flesh of Christ is flesh of the Virgin ; the sacred blood which flowed on mount Calvary had previously coursed through the veins of our Lady. Is there not an unspeakable dignity, greatness, glory in this ? The human mind is lost in contemplating the depths of this sublime truth. We almost shudder at the awful conclusion that the flesh of Christ is flesh of Mary ; for it seems to verge on the blasphemous. And yet it is true. Were it not true the Incarnation would not be real. If we accept the reality of the latter, and he is no Christian who does not, we must humbly accept its legitimate consequence. The very fear of blasphemy which alarms the soul is but a proof of the incomparable glory of the Divine Maternity. So nearly does it bring the creature to the Creator that we are, perhaps, afraid to consider what it involves, lest we seem to detract from the Divinity. But there is no danger of impiety in considering lovingly, and in holding firmly, all the logical consequences of a great truth : there is impiety, however, in rejecting them. The nearer, therefore, the maternal relations of the



Blessed Virgin, to our Saviour, bring her to the confines of the Divinity, the greater should be our admiration of her unapproachable grandeur ; the more ardent our love of her ; the more deep-seated our confidence.

Now, since the Divine maternity has necessarily brought our Lady into such close relations with the Godhead, we can easily understand what a dower of graces and prerogatives was conferred upon her. Truly, "Wisdom hath built for itself a house," when God created the Virgin Mary. And if the Omnipotent desired the Temple of Jerusalem which was, after all, only a temporary tabernacle of his glory, to be of such magnificence ; how much more must he not have desired that she, who through all eternity will be known as Mother of his only Son, should be enriched with all the treasures of grace.

Wishing to have her thus endowed, and being able to do it, he did it. Beautifully and truly does St. Anselm of Canterbury say : " It was becoming that the Virgin, to whom God the Father had resolved thus to give his only begotten Son, whom he loved as himself, that he one

and the same might be naturally the common Son of God the Father and of the Virgin, and whom the Son had chosen to be his Mother according to human nature, and in whom the Holy Ghost was to operate the Conception of Him from whom he proceeds, should be resplendent with such purity greater than which can only be found in God" (1).

(1) De Concept. Virg., c. 28.

## CHAPTER III.

### PREROGATIVES OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

We have seen the close relations into which the Blessed Virgin has been brought with the Divinity. We may here add that the more fully we allow our minds to dwell on the glorious privileges of our Lady, the more surely will we be led on to God. For all her greatness comes from Him, and presupposes the Incarnation. It is, therefore, a mistaken notion to imagine that devotion to the Blessed Virgin is an obstacle to love of God. The reverse is the fact. Theoretically it ought to be so ; practically it is so. The blasphemer of God is not a devotee, you may be well sure, of the Virgin ; the fervent client of Mary is never a scoffer of God's law. Can any one deny, from his heart, the truth of this ? And if not, why declaim against a devotion which leads no less surely to God, than the consideration of an effect to a knowledge of its cause ?

When the genial sunlight has withdrawn the last fringe of its glory from the western horizon, and the gloom of night has fallen over the chilled earth, the pale moon delights us with her softened rays. Beauteous in her chaste radiance, she sails a peaceful queen among myriad hosts of lesser fires. The deep azure of the firmament assumes a mellower tint as she slowly rises to the zenith; the glinting stars veil their scanty light at her approach; the deep dun of the storm-cloud changes to a creamy white when bathed in her mild effulgence. Beauty, poetry, sweetness,—all are mingled in her train; all the finer feelings of our nature are brought into play as we gaze upon her loveliness. Some will refuse to look upon her, lest they forget in her beauty the glory of the sun. Others will look upon her with indifference, missing, at once, her queenly magnificence and the noble thoughts to which it gives rise. Others, finally, gaze earnestly upon her; drink in her quiet splendour, and raise their minds to a consideration of its cause. Their intelligence expands with the knowledge they acquire of her relation to the sun;

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her reflected glory, pleasing in itself, is more pleasing still when seen as an effect of his action, and becomes the most powerful of all reasons for admiring his inexhausted and all-diffusive light. Thus on the night of our fallen humanity the Blessed Virgin rises in regal and unclouded glory. Everything which falls under her influence is chastened and subdued ; the glare of the world, in courts and halls where she is recognized, is toned down ; and the darkness of sin is lit up by a ray of hope when she is invoked. She is so beautiful that some say we ought not to think of her lest we forget God ; these are pious Protestants ; but alas ! how they miss the connecting link of the Christian Religion with God, as well as its poetry. Others look coldly on her, and pass on to their shameful vices, like revellers under the moonlight : these are learned infidels, who use their intelligence to small purpose. The devout Catholic, finally, unhesitatingly contemplates the Queen of Heaven in all her vastness of glory ; he lovingly traces her wonderful prerogatives to their source and origin. He, and he alone, has the

*rationale*, so to speak, of Religion. He, alone, can give a clear notion of the Incarnation, or assign a cause for the place of our Lady in Creation. He grasps the true relation of the Blessed Virgin to God ; her untold wealth of grace excites wonder and devotion and becomes but another motive for adoring the depths of God's unfathomable Wisdom and Love.

The Catholic idea of the Blessed Virgin contains, in the germ, all the truths of the Christian Religion. She was preserved immaculate ; therefore the fall of Adam is confessed : she was preserved because mother of God ; therefore the Incarnation of the Son of God is proclaimed : She was preserved through the merits of Christ ; therefore our Saviour's mission was supernatural. Thus we might follow on, and deduce from our idea of the Virgin the great truths of Christianity. This is another proof that a right knowledge of our Lady will draw us more closely to God. This will be evident if we piously consider some of her most striking prerogatives.

*The Immaculate Conception.*

We have already noted that Adam transgressed God's commandment, and that human nature was thereby polluted in its source. The tide of corruption flowed from generation to generation ; men were born "children of wrath," disinherited by the sin in Paradise. All the glorious privileges of grace which adorned the soul of Adam at his Creation, were forfeited by his sin, and were not transmitted to his descendants. Through "one man sin entered into this world, and by sin death ;" but we make one exception when we say that all mankind have been born under the ban of that original offence. That exception is the Blessed Virgin. We believe that Almighty God, by reason of the foreseen merits of the Redeemer, preserved her from every stain of original sin ; that her soul was ever pure and holy ; that from the first moment of her Conception she was immaculate, undefiled, unshaded by sin, or ought allied thereto. God's eternal decree in her favour, turned aside the stream of corruption which has flowed over all of us ; its tainted waters

touched her not. Her body was purer than Eve's; her soul unspotted, and ever joined to God in bonds of holy love. This preservation of the Blessed Virgin, in the first instant of her Conception, from every stain of original sin, accomplished by God as a wondrous privilege accorded to the mother of his Son, is what we mean by the Immaculate Conception. In the whole dreary waste of humanity, (of course we do not include Christ's sacred human nature) she is the one solitary bright spot; the one oasis on which the eye of God could ever look approvingly. She was the one "sealed fountain," the one "enclosed garden," into which Satan never entered; the one chaste Spouse, not cleansed, but always clean. Of all human beings the one who never for an instant had been subject to Satan, as a "child of wrath." It is a glorious privilege, and one whose truth we must vindicate.

We have already seen that after the fall in Eden, the Almighty gave hope to our first parents, and pronounced a threat against the devil: "*Inimicitias ponam inter te et mulierem, et semen tuum et*



*semen illius, ipsa conteret caput tuum !*" (Gen. III, 15.) I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and thy seed and her seed : she shall crush thy head. This passage has been called by the early writers in the Church the Proto-Gospel, for it contains a promise of the future Saviour. Enmity is to be put, or war is declared between Satan and the woman. What woman ! The whole of antiquity cries out with one voice, the Blessed Virgin. No sane man pretends that any other woman is meant ; none other could be meant. But not only is there to be enmity between Satan and the Woman, but, also, between his seed and her seed. Again, no one can doubt that Christ is to be understood by the seed of the Woman. It is unnecessary to insist on this point, viz ; that the Blessed Virgin and our Saviour are spoken of in this passage. Every writer of the Christian Church who alludes to this text, whether in ancient or modern times, explains it in this way. Now we argue thus : God in a solemn moment, when about to punish our hapless first parents, but intending to give them a ray of hope, asserts distinctly the identity of

the enmity which he will put between the woman and the devil, with that which he will put between her seed and Satan's seed. In other words, the enmity between Christ and the devil, is identical with that between the devil and the Blessed Virgin. But the warfare between Christ and the devil was absolute, perpetual, and excluded any preceding friendship. Therefore the enmity between the Blessed Virgin and the devil was absolute, perpetual, and excluded any preceding friendship. But this would not be true had our Lady been, even for one instant, subject to original sin, because during that instant there would not have been enmity between them. Therefore, we must conclude, that from the first instant of her Conception, the Blessed Virgin was preserved free from every stain of sin.

Again we can take the words—"she shall crush the head." It is quite true that some read, *he* shall crush thy head. But whichever be taken the following reasoning will hold good. As an effect about to follow from the enmity between the devil and the woman, and his seed and her seed, his (the devil's) head is to be crushed;

that is, his power is to be broken ; he is to be completely defeated. If we read—*he* shall crush thy head—it is Christ who by his death is to triumph over the serpent: if we say—*she* shall crush thy head,—it is the Blessed Virgin who through the power of her seed, Christ, is to gain the victory. But in either case the triumph over Satan is to be complete. If, however, the Blessed Virgin had ever been infected by sin the triumph would not have been complete. For, in the same way as the enmity of Christ and his Holy Mother for the devil was identical, so the triumph over Satan, which was an effect of that enmity, was to be identical ; with this one difference that Christ was to obtain it by his own merits, and the Blessed Virgin through his. We can thus amicably reconcile these two readings of the text, and attribute, as the early Fathers did, the triumph either to Christ, by his own merits, or to the B. Virgin, through the merits of her divine Son. But in either case we invincibly demonstrate that the Mother of God was ever free from spot, or stain of sin.

There are some who, not having, as we

must suppose, fully weighed the words of this text, maintain that the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception is of modern invention, and not justified by the early Church. Many make this statement in good faith, trusting to the assertions of some rash writer, who takes his own diseased imaginings for the sense of the primitive Church. Alas ! that it should be only in Religion that the blind readily accept the leadership of the blind. For these souls, and let us hope they are many, who long to love and honour our sweet Mother, but who have been thus imposed upon, we will cite a few sentences from early writers.

In the third century St. Hippolytus wrote : "The Lord was without sin, made according to his human nature of *two incorruptible woods*, i. e., of the Virgin and the Holy Ghost." If she is an "incorruptible wood," she could never have been defiled. And observe how closely the pious writer brings her in contact with the Holy Ghost. St. John Chrysostom, the glory of the eastern Church, explaining the text from Genesis III, 15, makes God speak thus to the serpent :

"Nor shall I be content with this that thou crawlest upon the earth ; I shall moreover, create a woman inimical to thee, and *knowing no league with thee.*" What is this but the Immaculate Conception ? And in a hymn recited on 16th Jan., in the early Greek Office we find : " O Spouse of God, thou alone amongst women put an end to the curse of our first parents : — thou hast *innovated* the laws of nature, O immaculate." And St. Ambrose, the great bishop of Milan, says : " The Virgin, by grace, free from every stain of sin " (1).

We might cite scores of such testimonies from every age of the Church. From all parts of Asia and Europe, from Africa and England, thousands of witnesses are ready to proclaim that the Mother of our Redeemer was ever spotless. Indeed the early Church, and especially the eastern part thereof, was more filled, so to speak, with the praises of the Blessed Virgin than it is in our own time.

But even if we had no positive proof

(1). Ser. 22 in Ps. 118).

from the Holy Scriptures, for be it remembered the Scriptures do not contain everything, still, who that fully grasps the Christian idea of the Incarnation, and, as a consequence, the idea of the Divine maternity, could hesitate to proclaim the Blessed Virgin immaculate? Of her substance was formed the sacred humanity assumed by the Eternal Son of God. Within her Virginal womb, for nine long months, God as truly dwelt as on his throne in Heaven. Can the mind of man, or the sublimer intelligence of Angels, imagine any thing, below God, so pure, so glorified, so filled with grace, as she? The sacred and mysterious relation in which she stands to the indwelling Divinity overwhelms our sense, and makes us pause with reverential awe. She is a creature, it is true; but yet the Mother of her Creator. Each breath she draws supplies nourishment to the tender body of her Divine Son. Each loving affection of her soul warms and fosters the humanity, of Jesus. If it were strictly enjoined on the priests who bore "the vases of the Lord," to be "clean," what spotless purity must not God have prepared in her who

bore his Son. In Jesus the human and divine nature constituted only one person, and that person was Divine, was as really God, as man. And that Divine person, God and man, dwelt within the Virgin, was nourished, as to his humanity, by her, taking flesh of her flesh. This is the awful truth of the Incarnation, as taught in the Christian Church; this is the incomparable dignity of the maternity of Mary.

If now it be held that the Virgin was subject, even for one short instant, to sin, to the corruption of Adam, what follows? Why, that the flesh which our Saviour assumed had once been corrupt; had been, O! blasphemous thought, the dwelling place of concupiscence, the abode of pollution. Surely no Christian soul can believe this. Yet, twist as we may, this would be the case had the Blessed Virgin been conceived in sin. For the identity of her flesh would remain, even had it been afterwards purified; and as Christ's flesh was of her substance, it would always be true that it had once been defiled.

Moreover, by reason of the same law of the imperishable identity of substance,

it is true, as already said, that some of the blood which ransomed us, had flowed in Mary's veins. With what scorn would the devils mock the blood which had once been subject to their sway.

Again ; Adam had a body made of undefiled earth. And was God so poor in resources, was his arm so shortened, that the body of his beloved Son must needs be formed of earth which had been polluted? Could no virginal clay be found for the body of the "second Adam" who was to atone for the sin of the first? Ah! yes ; it could be found, and it was found ; for the decree of exile had never been issued against the Virgin ; she had never been even for an instant under the ban of original sin.

The body of Eve was formed from the unpolluted substance of Adam. And shall it be thought that the flesh of the Mother of the Fratricide was purer than that of the Mother, whose Son was the Saviour of his brethren?

Christian soul, do not seek to lessen the glory of God's Mother. You cannot exalt the Son by detracting from the Mother. You can do no injury to the Son



by duly glorifying the Mother, for all her glory comes from the fact that she is His Mother. How jealously you guard the honour of your own mother ; you would never let, if you could help it, your enemy triumph over her. Are you a more dutiful, or loving child than He who said—honour thy Father and thy Mother? Christ is God as well as man ; he could prevent the devil from triumphing over his Mother. Will you dare assert that he did not do as much as you would have done?

O ! Soul that art, perchance, seeking for peace, turn to the spotless Spouse and say from a full heart : O ! Mary conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee. Glorify her in her lofty prerogative of Immaculate, and ask her to guide you to that peace which True Faith alone can give.

## CHAPTER IV.

### PREROGATIVES OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

We have seen that the Blessed Virgin was preserved free from every stain of sin, from the first moment of her Conception. "Thou art all beautiful, O Virgin daughter of Sion ; thou art all beautiful, and there is no spot in thee," is joyously proclaimed by millions of devout souls on earth, and is re-echoed from the eternal mansions of heaven, by Saints and Angels who exult in this glory of their Queen.

But there is another prerogative of our Lady which, in a certain sense, is more glorious. It is her fruitful virginity ; her dignity of mother with her virginal purity. The virgin earth in the hands of God formed the body of Adam ; the virgin flesh of our Lady, overshadowed by the power of the most High, produced the sacred body of our Saviour. St. Matthew, in the first chapter of his Gospel, after

relating the human genealogy of Christ, and his Conception, adds : " Now all this was done that the word might be fulfilled, which the Lord spoke by the Prophet, saying : Behold, a Virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a Son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which, being interpreted, is, God with us." And St. Luke (c. I, v. 34, 35) makes the Blessed Virgin herself give testimony to the Angel Gabriel of her virginal life, and explains to us, by the words of the Angel in reply, how the awful mystery of the Incarnation shall be brought about.

To lead in the flesh the life of an Angel was something unknown in the old Law. Our Blessed Lady was the first example ; and so thoroughly did the knowledge of this pervade the early Church that the epithet—Virgin—became peculiarly hers. St. Epiphanius ( *Haeres*, 70 ) writes : " Who, during the course of ages, has ever dared to pronounce the name of the most Holy Mary without at once adding the word Virgin ? Abraham was called the friend of God, and it will remain ; Jacob was called Israel, and it will not be changed : the epithet Virgin was given

to the most Holy Mary, and it shall never be taken away, for she has remained unpolluted."

Ancient pagans admired those who were supposed to lead a life of celibacy. The Vestal virgins of Rome were held in the highest honor. But in our day the world rather hates those who imitate the Mother of God; and some will even pronounce it impossible to live and die a virgin. Nor are there wanting persons who profess to read Scripture, and to believe in the Incarnation, who boldly assert that after the birth of our Saviour, his Virgin Mother bore children to St. Joseph, her chaste Spouse. The blood of a Catholic curdles at this horrible profanity, and our pen almost refuses to write the words; still it may be well to note the dread abyss of error into which heresy can lead a soul redeemed by the death of our Saviour. It seems almost like the guilt of doubt to notice, even for the purpose of confuting, this un-christian sentiment of persons claiming to be christians. Scripture contradicts it; for the words of the Blessed Virgin to the Angel (Luke, c. I, v. 34) prove her resolve of

leading a life of virginity ; and she only accepted the dignity of Mother of God when assured by the Angel that it would not involve a loss of the virtue she so dearly prized. St. Augustine has a beautiful passage showing how, notwithstanding the birth of our Saviour, his holy Mother was ever truly a virgin ; he says : “ The sun’s ray penetrates into the crystal, and by insensible subtilty passes through it, appearing the same within as without. Thus, my brethren, by entering it does not injure the crystal, nor destroy it by going out, because both at its entrance and at its exit the glass remains whole. The sun’s ray, therefore, does not break the crystal ; and shall the entrance and the exit of the Divinity violate the integrity of the Virgin ? ” (1) How sublime are all the teachings of our Church ; how they reveal, at each close inspection, some new glory of the Creator’s power. How far removed from the grovelling ideas of the “ animal man.” They startle the hearer, : first ; their strange beauty charms him ; if he pauses to investigate

(1) Ser., 3, Adv.

their claims to his belief he finds them overpowering ; as he examines them more carefully, wonder after wonder is disclosed, until a perfect vision of loveliness bursts upon his enraptured mind. Standing in the glorious light of God's truth the history of the world is no longer a riddle ; the origin and end of man no longer an unsolved enigma. The simplest child of the Church, if properly instructed in our Religion, is more refined, more gentle, and has nobler ideas, and loftier aspirations, than the most learned outsider. The latter stumbles where the former " rejoiceth, like a giant, running his way."

*The Assumption.*

Although the Church has not pronounced it a matter of Faith, still Catholics have ever believed that shortly after death, the soul of the Blessed Virgin was reunited to her pure body, and that the latter was, by a special privilege, assumed into heaven. This belief is imbedded in the writings and teachings, in the soul, so to speak, of the early Church. In the Christian idea our Lady is the masterpiece of

God's almighty hand. Foreshadowed by God in paradise,—symbolized by the bush seen by Moses burning, but not consumed, for she gave birth to the "light of the world" without losing her virginity,—extolled by the Prophets, the Blessed Virgin comes into the world as the crowning glory of Creation. She is the highest created expression of God's infinite love. All the gifts and supernatural dower of which a creature is capable were bestowed upon her. The only limit to her excellence is that which arises from her finite nature. In a word, God gave her every grace and privilege which she was capable of receiving. If we are asked: "What did God give Mary?" we can truly answer: all the beauty, glory, power, virtue,—all the grace and wisdom, that it is possible for a creature to have. Hence St. Ephrem calls her "more sublime than the heavenly citizens... more honoured than the Cherubin... more holy than the Seraphim, and incomparably more glorious than all the other heavenly things" (1).

(1) Scr. 2 de Laud. Virg.

We have seen that she was preserved from the sin of our fallen race, and that, a mother though still a pure Virgin, she lived enriched with the treasures of God's grace ; she was not, however, exempt from death. Through its dark portals alone can man come into the presence of his maker. Through death Christ conquered, and entered into his glory ; and through death all his followers must pass to take part in his triumph. Hence, our Blessed Lady died. Her pure soul was loosened from the bonds of her unpolluted body ; the action of life ceased, not through any disease of the flesh, but rather from the holy languishing of her spirit for God. As the odour of a sweet wild flower goes forth to greet the bright sunshine, whilst the tender petals and fluttering leaflets retain their soft loveliness, so the soul of Mary went to the embrace of its Creator, leaving her body uncorrupted and beautiful. It was death, but death devoid of terrors, and stingless. It was death, but very like to the dawning of life. Corruption was not to follow. David had long before announced : "Thou wilt not permit thy holy ones to see cor-



ruption." Dust to dust was the consequence of sin ; but Mary was sinless ; hence she fell not under its infliction. To her the sin of Adam had never been transmitted ; it was fitting therefore that she should be exempt from its earthly punishment.

Moreover, what christian soul can persuade itself that Jesus-Christ, true God and true man, should permit that pure body, from whose substance he had taken his sacred humanity, to moulder into dust, to become the food of loathsome worms ? We respect the ashes of our dead ; we guard them from all profanation ; we do all we can to show our love and honour. Will man never learn that our Divine Saviour was the best of sons, that he, too, would do all he could to honour his holy Mother ? He could preserve her mortal remains from corruption ; he could reunite them to her soul, and take both to himself ; therefore he did not leave her body to decay, but assumed it, united to her soul, into heaven.

. Artemisia, queen of Caria, is said to have mixed the ashes of her husband Mausolus with water and to have drunk them, so

great was her love and devotion. It may be but a beautiful fable ; still it shows how true love endeavours to assimilate to itself the loved object ; how it yearns to make it live of its own life. Now the love of Christ for his Mother was most true and holy ; as man, he loved her from natural affection, intensified by his perfection and her amability ; as God, he loved her for her incomparable virtues and conformity to his will. Hence, he would desire to assimilate her, in as much as possible, to himself, and to make her a partaker of his life of glory. This would be obtained by the Assumption. Artemisia could only make her husband's dust partake, in a certain sense, of a few years of mortal life ; Christ has made his Mother's body a sharer of the everlasting ages of eternity.

After the Ascension of our Saviour into heaven his holy Mother dwelt for some years on earth. From her the Apostles learnt much of Christ's early history ; from her the faithful received lessons of holiness and truth. Closely shrouded, after the manner of the East, the Blessed Virgin passed through the streets of Jerusalem, and took her way across the

torrent of Cedron, to the garden of Gethsemani, and thence up the weary slopes of Calvary. O ! how often did she do this, and how often did she trace each step taken by our Saviour ! On the heights of Calvary she would kneel for long hours, not sorrowing for her Son, but praying, praying for us. She prayed that His blood might not have been shed in vain for you, and me, but that our hearts might own His sway. What soul can form any conception of the feelings of our Blessed Lady praying in the solemn silence of Calvary ! Before her eyes was spread a panorama of the future. She saw the Church founded by her Son gradually extending over the whole earth, gathering into its fold the full measure of the Elect. She saw its combats and triumphs, and how, as ages rolled on, her own glory would be more clearly revealed. She saw, and, oh ! how she then prayed, souls wavering on the threshold of life, afraid to turn back, and yet doubtful about entering the fold of Christ. Who can number the souls her prayers brought to the truth, or the sins from which they preserved us. Long would she kneel, and then with a heart

almost bursting with love, she would rise and gaze on the spot where His Cross had stood. Slowly, reluctantly, she would tear herself away, to speed on some mission of charity ; to bring consolation to some sufferer, or hope to some in despair. As she moved along, with an air of heaven hovering around her, the passers by looked on her with holy awe ; the idle crowds became mute and respectful, and mothers held up their little ones to catch a sight of the " Mother of the Crucified. "

Thus she lived on, helping to build up and consolidate that Church of which she is the glory and the figure. One day she was missed from the rugged heights of Calvary. Another day passed, and she was seen not. Then the frightened whisper went round amongst the Believers in the Crucified that the Virgin was no more. Her body had been laid to rest, but on seeking her tomb it was found to contain nothing but lilies. God respected her wonderful humility, and brought her quietly to himself. Early Christians, visiting Jerusalem, asked their brethren to point out her sepulchre, and they were shown an empty tomb. All knew she had

died, and then that her body had disappeared through no human agency. Thus the conviction of her glorious Assumption became rooted in the traditions of the early Church, and has come down to us from those who often saw the "Mother of the Crucified" praying for you and me in Gethsemani and on Golgotha.

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## CHAPTER V.

### IS IT LAWFUL TO HONOUR THE VIRGIN MARY.

The teachings of our holy Religion are so often misrepresented that many outside of the Church think us guilty of crimes, which our souls abhor. When our real belief is explained, it is, except in the case of Mysteries of Religion, so consonant with right reason that candid minds will at once embrace it. We do not except the case of mysteries of Religion as if they were against right reason ; they are not against it ; they are above it.

Devotion to the Saints and to our Blessed Lady has been so persistently misrepresented, that those who differ from us in Religion will scarcely believe what we say about it. So impatient are they of this devotion, under a mistaken notion of our Faith, that they become guilty of little less than downright insult and impiety against God's holy ones. It is painful to

Christian ears to hear the flippant, familiar style of address which many employ when speaking of the greatest Saints. The Mother of God is spoken of as Mary, and the Apostles as Peter, Paul &c. One would suppose that the key-bearer of Heaven and the Apostle of the Gentiles were their footmen. Yet, we suppose, it is not wilful impiety, so much as a wish to dissociate themselves from what they imagine to be Catholic belief, that causes them to adopt such an unceremonious form of address.

We say at once that it is unlawful, that it is a grievous sin to give supreme, or divine honour to any one save God only. Catholics honour the Blessed Virgin and the Saints, but it is with an honour and a veneration infinitely inferior to those which they pay to God. We all know this : we all learn it in our Catechism, and hear it from our Altars. Whatever may be the words, or actions of Catholics when praying before a statue, or image of a Saint, they never intend to give Supreme honour to any created being. Their words and actions are to be interpreted by their belief : for words may be misapplied, and actions may be equivocal.

Both the one and the other are determined by the intention of the doer, or speaker.

Before proving that it is lawful to honour the Blessed Virgin, we will explain the meaning attached to this word by Catholics. Some speak of the *Cultus*, or *Cult*, of the Saints. We love Latin latin ; but we hate Latin English ; hence we will use such words as honour, devotion. &c.

Honour is a testimonial paid to the excellence which we recognise in another. In proportion as the excellence thus recognised increases, the honour paid increases likewise. Thus, in the civil order, we honour a governor more than a magistrate, and a king more than a governor. Still, the deference which we show to the governor is real, as is, also, real that shown to the king. One does not exclude the other ; nor is an injury done to the king from the fact that we honour his friend and subordinate. On the contrary, it is an additional mark of respect shown to him, since by honouring the governor we testify our veneration for the royal authority of which he participates. This is civil honour ; still it has a close analogy with religious.



We acknowledge in God an infinite and supreme excellence and perfection ; consequently, our honour, or worship of Him should be supreme. Since a supreme excellence can be found only in God, it follows that only to Him can supreme honour be given. Whilst the Church studiously inculcates this, she, likewise, teaches that this supreme honour does not exclude an inferior one for God's friends, even as the highest civil honour shown the king does not exclude an inferior one for the governor.

It is evident that the chosen servants of the Almighty who spread his glory abroad on the earth, who fought, without wavering, the good fight, who cheerfully laid down their lives rather than renounce his holy teachings, have a degree of religious excellence to which a corresponding testimonial may be paid by us. Greater than this excellence of the Saints is that of the Mother of Him " Who, being in the form of God, thought it no robbery himself to be equal to God." (1) Further, by reason of the divine maternity, we re-

(1. Phil. 2, 6.)

cognise a sublime, but finite dignity, and consequently, our honour for her is greater than that which we have for the Saints, but infinitely inferior to our adoration of God. Thus, then, Catholics distinguish three grades of religious honour,—one for the Saints and Angels, technically called *Dulia*; another, *Hyperdulia*, for the Blessed Virgin; and thirdly *Latria*, or a supreme, divine, infinite honour for God, and God only. The inferior grades of honour are not injurious to God, for we honour Him in the Saints. All their dignity and excellence are the free gifts of Him who, according to the Royal Prophet, “is wonderful in his Saints.”

From the foregoing explanation of the teaching of our Holy Church regarding the distinction between the honour we pay to God, and that which we give to his Saints, it will be an easy task to show the lawfulness of this latter, if, indeed, it be not sufficiently evident from what has already been said.

The only reason to reject, as unlawful, honour and devotion to the Blessed Virgin, and the asking of her intercession would be lest it might be injurious to the

one Supreme Mediator, Christ Jesus, who has redeemed us by his precious blood, and who is our advocate before the throne of the Eternal Father. If therefore, we show from Holy Writ, that it is lawful to ask the intercession of the Saints, every candid mind will admit that it is no injury to him to do as much in regard to the Blessed Virgin, who was holier and nearer and dearer to God than any Saint, or Angel.

St. Paul surely knew and practised what was pleasing to God. He, however, who gloried in nought save in "Christ, and him Crucified," frequently requests the prayers of his brethren. He says: "I beseech you, therefore, brethren, through our Lord Jesus-Christ, and by the charity of the Holy-Ghost, that you assist me in your prayers for me to God." (Rom. XV, 30). He asks the Ephesians (VI, 19) for their prayers. He says to the Thessalonians (1 Ept. Cap. V, 25.) "Brethren pray for us." He makes the same request in the last chapter to the Hebrews, and in other places. From this it is evident that St. Paul did not think it an injury to Christ to ask the prayers of his fellow-

men. Shall it then be lawful to ask the prayers of men, and unlawful to ask those of God's friends, who, clothed in white robes, follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth? It would be a strange blindness to assert this. We know and believe with St. Peter (Acts. IV, 12) that "there is no other name under Heaven given to men whereby we must be saved," except that of Jesus Christ. We know and believe that it is only through the merits of our crucified Redeemer that the Saints, or our Blessed Lady can obtain for us assistance; but we likewise know that God will listen more readily to the voice of those who glorified him on earth, than to that of sinful men.

But we have more. Our Saviour tells us that in the Resurrection the elect will be as the "Angels of God in Heaven." (Math. XXII, 30). Now the Patriarchs honoured the Angels with religious devotion. Abraham, Lot and Jacob did this. Of Josue we read that when the Prince of the host of the Lord appeared "Josue fell on his face to the ground. And worshipping said &c." If, therefore, it be lawful to honour the Angels who are

creatures, shall it not be lawful to honour those who, according to the words of Christ himself, shall be "as the Angels of God in Heaven?" Most certainly. Moreover, in the old law the departed just were honoured with religious devotion (Eccls. XLI et seq.) The aged Patriarch Jacob commanded the names of his fathers Abraham and Isaac to be called upon the sons of Joseph. What was this but an invocation of the sainted dead that God, through their prayers, might be propitious to the living? So common amongst the Jews was the invocation of the Angels and Saints that in the year of our Lord 70, Rabbi Eliazer Hakalie composed a litany of invocations which was used in the Synagogues of Germany, and other places, and of which the 22nd invocation is: "Michael, prince of mercies, pray for Israel that it may rule in the high places &c." This is surely explicit enough. Invocation 14th reads: "Imchiel prince, sustain those who are weak, and who bow down in prayer; obtain *through the killed and burnt on account of his* (i. e. God's) *holy name* &c." In this way the Synagogues prayed for help

through the intercession of those whom they considered martyrs. We can conclude from this liturgical prayer that the invocation of Angels and Saints was common among the Jews.

The early Christians, taught by the authority of Scripture, and by the Apostles, ever honoured the Saints. In what are known as the "Apostolic Constitutions," a work probably of the first century, we find that servants and masters were to abstain from work on the "feasts of the Apostles, of St. Stephen protomartyr, and of all the other holy martyrs who esteemed Christ more than life." Tertullian, in the second century, affirms that : "we make oblations for the dead on the anniversary of their *birth day*," (that is, the day of their death.) St. Cyprian asserts that we offer "sacrifices as often as we celebrate the passion of the martyrs, and their annual commemoration." Side by side with these and innumerable other testimonies which might be added from the works of St. Augustine, St. Ambrose and St. Chrysostom, we have the mute language of sepulchral slabs still extant in the depths of the Catacombs. No Chris-

tian can read without emotion the rude scrawls of our persecuted forefathers in the Faith, in which they bear witness to their belief in the intercession of the souls with Christ. Now with loving sweetness a sister addresses her martyred brother, cutting on his tombstone:—"Mayst thou live in Christ our God; *pray to Jesus for Sylvina.*" Now a mother recommends her daughter to her Son, inscribing:—"I, thy mother, Basila, recommend (to thee) the innocence of thy sister." Now a sorrowing widow asks the prayers of her dead husband;—" *Pray for Celsena thy wife.*" How different are these voices from the Catacombs from the words of those who oppose us. Yet how much in keeping are they with the authority of Scripture and with the doctrine of our Holy Church. God's friends on earth have ever asked the prayers of God's friends in heaven.

Although what has been hitherto said applies, in general, to the lawfulness of honouring the Angels and Saints, it would be quite sufficient to vindicate our devotion towards the Queen of heaven. But we will consider how she has been honoured in Scripture.

We have already quoted the words used by the Almighty in Eden, when he gave hope to Adam of a Redeemer to come. The Woman, between whom and the devil there was to be a perpetual enmity, was the Blessed Virgin. God himself, thus early in the history of man, spoke her praises. He might have simply promised a Saviour without any reference to the Woman from whom he was to take flesh. In the Protestant idea of our holy Mother this is what he ought to have done. But God thought differently. He even spoke of her before the Redeemer ;—"I will put enmity between thee and the Women ; and thy seed and her seed—," not, assuredly, placing her above our Divine Saviour ; but in his last direct communication with Adam he wished to show the lofty prerogative of the Divine Maternity, and the intimate relation of the Blessed Virgin to the great act of Redemption. "She shall crush thy head ;" this is God's solemnly recorded sentence regarding the victory of our Lady over Satan : these are his words of honour towards her. He did not fear her as a rival of his beloved Son ; for her victory was to come through him.



He did not think it endangered the supreme honour due to himself, to glorify, in this manner, for all time, the spotless Virgin. Who, then, best expresses the idea of the Almighty,—the one who proclaims with loving heart her victory which God foretold ; or the one who either denies that victory, or grudgingly mentions it with bated breath ? The former gives her no more honour than is warranted by God's word ; the latter gives much less : the former gives hope to the sinner, even as God gave it to Adam, by telling of her greatness ; the latter pleads as an excuse for not following God's example, that to do so *would be an insult*. Oh, Christian soul ! can there be a worse temptation than this ? How can you offend God by imitating Him ? If God deemed it well to announce to our wretched first Parents, that one of their descendents would be so holy and pure as to wage an eternal war against Satan, and vanquish him in the fight, shall it be unlawful for us to encourage the sinner to hope for pardon by repeating his words ? The honour which we give our Lady does not exceed that given to her by God. So long as it is kept

within that limit it must be lawful, and praiseworthy.

We will not trace the praises of our Blessed Lady through the Prophets and other inspired writers of the old Testament, but will see what the Gospels say of her.

Any one who carefully reads the first chapter of St. Luke's Gospel must surely be convinced of the greatness, the glory and the sublime dignity of our Lady, and of the lawfulness of venerating and honouring her. An Angel, the ambassador of the Most High, was sent "into a city of Galilee called Nazareth, to a Virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David: and the name of the Virgin was Mary." The sacred writer gives a clear and precise account of the wonderful event. The humble Virgin was sitting in the silence of her poor home, wrapt up in contemplation of God's love for man. "And the Angel, being come in, said to her: Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee: Blessed art thou among women." These are no idle words; they are not the vain compliments of an earthly Ambassador; they are from God. Assist-

ing before the Godhead's throne the Angel had received his mission, and the form of his salutation was dictated in heaven. Think on this Christian soul ; listen with awe to the Archangel Gabriel praising our Lady, and praising her on the part of God. His words are endorsed by God ; the Father, Son and Holy-Ghost speak through their Ambassador, and proclaim to all time that she, the Blessed Virgin, is "*full of grace*" that the *Lord is with her*, that she is *blessed among women*. She was full of grace ; that is, there was no place for sin in her lofty soul. All her thoughts were holy ; all her aspirations pure ; all her faculties sanctified. She was, indeed, the Spouse spoken of in the Canticles who was all beautiful, and in whom there was no stain. Within and without undefiled ; the solitary bright spot on the dreary waste of Creation, the Angel stood with reverence before her, and spoke his God given words : " Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee : Blessed art thou among women." Who shall dare to contradict God's Angel ? Who shall brand as unlawful that which heaven's Ambassador teaches ? Again we may ask :

who best expresses God's will ; the one who daily repeats with filial love this Angelic salutation ; or the one who denounces him for so doing ?

We must pass over in silence the remainder of the Angel's conversation with Mary, and consider how a holy woman addressed her. The Virgin went to visit her cousin Elizabeth. This holy matron was "filled with the Holy Ghost," as St. Luke tells us, and cried out with a loud voice : "Blessed art thou among women ; and blessed is the fruit of thy womb. And whence is this to me, that the Mother of my Lord should come to me ?" Evidently the Scriptures have agreed to extol the Blessed Virgin, and to set the seal of reprobation on the sentence which forbids us to honour her.

And what says the Virgin herself ? Out of the humble gratitude of her heart she uttered that wonderful canticle of praise known as the *Magnificat* : "My soul doth magnify the Lord : and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour : because he hath regarded the humility of his handmaid : for, behold, from henceforth *all generations shall call me blessed.*"

Now we argue in this way : It is lawful to honor one whom Elizabeth "filled with the Holy Ghost," whom God's ambassador, whom God himself honoured : but all these honoured our Blessed Lady ; therefore it is lawful to honour her. This reasoning cannot be gainsaid ; it is absolutely certain. Equally certain is it that the form of religion which denies honour to the Blessed Virgin cannot be of God. A Religion having God for its author, would speak of our Lady as the Archangel spoke. It is surely a dreadful thing to give insult where God gave honour.

We give no greater veneration and honour to the Blessed Virgin than we are warranted by the highest authority in giving. Our hope in the prayers and intercession of our Lady is rooted in the Scriptural facts, that she triumphed over Satan ; that she is full of grace ; that the Lord is with her ; that she is blessed among women : and all these are facts because she is Mother of God. We have St. Paul's authority for asking the prayers of others : we have God's authority for honouring the Blessed Virgin. Surely this is enough to justify us in honouring

our Lady, and in asking her prayers.

No Catholic dreams of putting her before God ; no Catholic believes that she purchased our Redemption. But through her Divine Son she is powerful to aid us. " He that is mighty hath done great things to me," she herself said ; and we believe that the prayers and intercession of her whom God so honoured, to whom he did " great things," to whom Christ is indebted for his sacred humanity, will never fail to obtain their request. Only a defective knowledge of our belief, or a wilful blindness to the teachings of our Church, could give rise to the strange ideas attributed to us on this point.

A love for Mary must ever foster a love for God. If, according to the Apostle (Rom., I, 20) " the invisible things of him, from the Creation of the world, are clearly seen, *being understood by the things that are made*, his eternal power also and divinity ;" how much more must the " eternal power " and " divinity " of God be understood by lovingly contemplating her who is admittedly the masterpiece of Creation ? Mary leads to God ; she is the nearest link in the chain of

Creation to his footstool. Let those who censure us for praising and honouring her stop not short with us. Let them censure Elizabeth "filled with the Holy Ghost"; yet higher; let them censure the Angel "sent by God": yet higher; let their awful impiety at last reach its height, and let them censure God himself, for he it was who first and most honoured her. He proclaimed her praises in Eden; he extolled her by his ambassador in Nazareth, and from henceforth all generations shall call her Blessed.

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## CHAPTER VI.

### UTILITY OF DEVOTION TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

This is a subject of very great importance. The wonderful privileges and glory of our dear Mother would be of little benefit to us, were she not able and willing to assist those who devoutly invoke her aid. That it is lawful to honour her we have already proved : we need scarcely stop to show that she can make intercession for us. Yet there are persons who deny the power of the Saints in heaven. Some think them ignorant of our petitions ; others imagine them powerless to second them. Such as these have attended but little to the words of Holy Writ.

In fact, we read (Tobias, XII, 12) the following words of the Angel Raphael to Tobias : " When thou didst pray with tears, and didst bury the dead, and didst leave thy dinner, and hide the dead by



day in thy house, and bury them by night, *I offered thy prayer to the Lord.*" There is no ambiguity of expression ; the Angel plainly assures Tobias that he himself had presented his payer to the Lord. He must have known, therefore, the old man's petition. Not less clear are the words (Zach., I, 12) -- "And the Angel of the Lord answered, and said: O Lord of hosts. how long wilt thou not have mercy on Jerusalem, and on the cities of Juda, with which thou hast been angry ?" Therefore the Angels knew the wants of mortals, and prayed for them. But we have already seen that according to our Saviour's words (Math., XXII, 30) the just will be like the Angels of God in heaven. Therefore they, too, can know our wants, and can assist us by their prayers.

Moreover we have (II Macchabes, XV, 12) that Onias and Jeremias, after their death, prayed for the Israelites. Judas had a vision in which he saw Onias holding up his hands, and praying for all the people of the Jews : there appeared, also, another man, admirable for age and glory, and environed with great beauty.

and majesty. Onias said : " This is he that prayeth much for the people, and for all the holy City, Jeremias the Prophet of God." This is a most noteworthy testimony : for from it we learn that not only do the Angels pray for men, but the souls of the just also perform a like office. So common among the Jews was this belief that the historian Josephus makes Abraham, when about to immolate Isaac, address him thus : " When God by prayers and sacrifice shall have received thy departed soul, and shall have placed it near himself, *thou wilt be the helper of solace of my old age*, for which cause I principally educated thee."

In the New Testament we have St. Peter not obscurely promising to intercede for the faithful after his death—" And I will endeavour that you frequently have, after my decease, whereby you may keep a memory of these things " (2<sup>nd</sup> Peter I, 15). And in Apocalipses, V, 8, we read : " The four living creatures, and the four and twenty ancients fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, *which are the prayers of the Saints.*"

It is, then, certain that the Angels and Saints in heaven know some, at least, of our wants, and can, and do pray for us. How they know them is more a question of Philosophy than piety ; nevertheless it may be well to say a few words on this point, to show that philosophic truth is not opposed to our Faith.

God is the infinite reality ; in him is the reason and cause of all being. We may compare his Divine Essence to a bright mirror in which is reflected every created substance, every reality. It reflects the actions of men, with their causes and consequences. He who looks upon that mirror sees as much as his limited nature is capable of taking in. Now the just in heaven, through the light of glory, have a vision of God ; that is, they look, as it were, upon that mirror. Their perception of the glory of God is according to their degree of merit. Each is fully and perfectly happy in his vision, though some see more than others. Thus there are "many mansions," as Christ said, in his Father's house. We may well imagine how the Almighty, in order to increase the external glory of his chosen servants,

causes them to see in himself, amongst other things, the acts of homage which we offer them, and the prayers which we make. No sane philosopher can deny this; hence our Holy Church, in authorizing devotion towards the Saints, is sound in Philosophy as well as in Theology. Both reason and Scripture are therefore against those who imagine that the Saints in heaven know nought of our prayers.

Since it is certain that the Saints can, and do, pray for us, it is evident that devotion to the Blessed Virgin is no idle, or empty form, but something most useful to us. Consider the state of a Christian soul that has fallen into mortal sin. By its own free act it has disinherited itself; of its own will it ceased to be a "child of God," and became a slave of the devil. It rebelled against God and proudly said: "I will not serve." It drove God from its bosom and called in his bitter enemy. Of its own choice it has become a castaway; and now torn, mangled and bleeding unto eternal death, it lies a foul spot on the face of Creation. What more could God do for it than he has done? He re-

deemed it by his blood ; he nourished it with his grace. What does he owe it ? Who dare assert that he owes it anything ? He is perfectly free to leave it in its degredation and ruin. True, he is merciful ; but a reparation is due his offended majesty. He has promised pardon to the repentant sinner ; but would it not be a great benefit for the sinner to have some one more pleasing to God than himself, to ask for the grace necessary to a true conversion ? Surely it would ; and God would answer more readily the prayers of his holy ones. The Almighty himself teaches us this in the last chapter of Job. He tells Eliphaz that his wrath is kindled against him and his two friends, and then adds : " Take unto you therefore seven oxen and seven rams, and go to my servant Job, and offer for yourselves a holocaust : and my servant Job shall pray for you : *his face I will accept that folly be not imputed to you.*" The eternal Truth that knows no change shows us that through the intercession of his holy servant Job, he will pardon those three men. If, therefore, the prayers of the just, in life, are so much more powerful than those of the

unjust, how much greater will not their efficacy be when freed from the bonds of the flesh, they enjoy God in heaven? They will then be more closely united to him; they will love him more; their prayers will be more ardent, and, consequently, more powerful. The prayers of Job resting in the bosom of God would surely be more efficacious than the prayers of Job still a wayfarer; for the least in the Kingdom of God is greater than the most powerful on earth.

What a consolation to us to know that we have such a powerful advocate as the Holy Mother of God. She is exalted above all the choirs of Angels and Archangels, of Cherubims and Seraphims, and other heavenly spirits. Her lofty quality of Mother of the Incarnate Son of God gives her a title to consideration which no other creature can possess. The sacred Humanity of our Divine Saviour, now resplendent in glory, owes its origin to her. How poorly must they understand the loving Heart of Jesus who think it possible for Him to slight his Mother's prayers. How keenly must they wound his love who insult her from whom he

took flesh. Imagine some thoughtless, or impious soul scornfully asking: "Who is this Virgin of whom we hear so much?" And listen in awe to the voice which thunders through the heavenly courts, and startles the abyss below, replying: "She is my Mother; beware how you insult her." If it were well for Eliphaz and his companions to have a Job to pray for them, how immeasurably better for us to have the Blessed Virgin.

Christian soul! are you happily in a state of innocence? If so, the help of our Lady will avail you much to preserve that innocence amid all the dangers which continually threaten it.

Are you on the road of repentance? If so, her help will be invaluable in obtaining for you strength of purpose, grace to fight against the old evil habits and secret vices which are not dead, but fiercely smoulder beneath the ashes of your repentance. In an unguarded moment they may break forth into a flame. She will aid you to avert this danger.

Are you in the bonds of sin and vice? If so, how powerful will be her help in obtaining for you grace to break them.

You cannot obtain pardon from God without sincere repentance ; repentance cannot take place without grace. Perhaps you cannot pray properly for that saving grace ; but there is one hope ; you can ask our sweet Mother to obtain for you the grace of prayer. You can ask her to plead your cause before the throne of her offended Son.

In the second chapter of St. John we read that at the marriage feast in Cana of Galilee, Christ did a "beginning of miracles," and he did it at the request of his mother. We are told that the wine failed. Naturally enough the young couple would feel confused at this event. The Blessed Virgin pitied their embarrassment and said to Jesus : "They have no wine." His answer shows that had it not been for her he would not yet have made a "beginning of miracles ;" for he says : "my hour is not yet come." By a strange perversity of judgment some persons have sought to find a rebuke from Jesus to his Mother in his reply. She who was "full of grace" could not deserve it ; and He who commanded us to "honour our Father and our Mother" could not give it. We



may be disrespectful to our mother; Christ could not be. Hence the words of his reply are to be read, not as they lie coldly on the page, but as they fell in gentle accents from his lips, and accompanied by his loving smile. They merely show that in deference to *her wish* he anticipates what would otherwise have been deferred. The Blessed Virgin knew what he meant, and told the waiters to do whatsoever he should say to them. Christ changed water into wine, and thus through the intervention of the Blessed Virgin he began his wonderful miracles.

What better proof than this do we want of her power with her beloved Son? She did not even *ask* for the miracle; she merely showed her anxiety at the confusion of her host,—“They have no wine.” If now she should stand before the throne of her Divine Son, and with accents of sorrow should say as she points to some prostrate sinner,—“He has no grace, no power to rise,” can we imagine that Jesus would listen less graciously, or grant less readily what she seeks, than he did at Cana of Galilee? He knew the want of wine at the marriage feast before she

mentioned it ; yet he would not have supplied it but for her asking. So too he knows our wants, but perchance he may not give us help until she asks it for us.

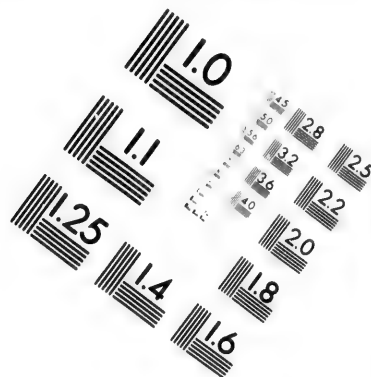
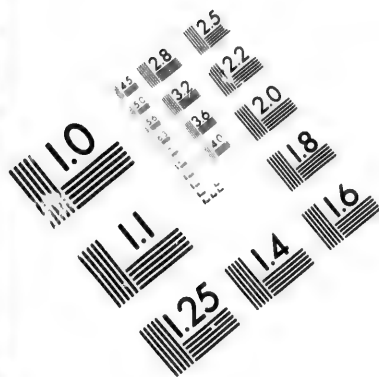
Let us turn then with confidence to this sweet refuge of sinners. In distress, or danger, or sickness ; in time of trial and temptation, let us not be cast down and sad. Our load may be heavy ; our way dark ; the end uncertain. But the gentle Mother of the Crucified is ever ready to listen to our voice, and to pray for us. She loves Jesus so much that she ardently desires to see him loved and honoured by all. Hence she looks not at our sins, nor does she consider our ingratitude ; she merely sees in us souls redeemed by the blood of her beloved Son, and which she hopes to reconcile to him by her intercession. We have been sinful, it is true, but we wish, at least, to love our God. We wish to serve Jesus-Christ and to die in his favour. He may be very angry at us on account of our transgressions, but his holy Mother will help us to appease his just wrath. Let us beseech her to lead us by the hand to God's throne, and to plead our cause

with our Redeemer. Through her prayers  
grace will be given, and we may recover  
the lost friendship of God.

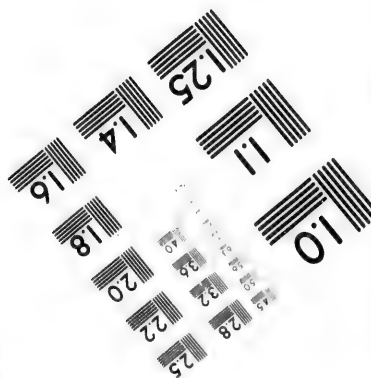
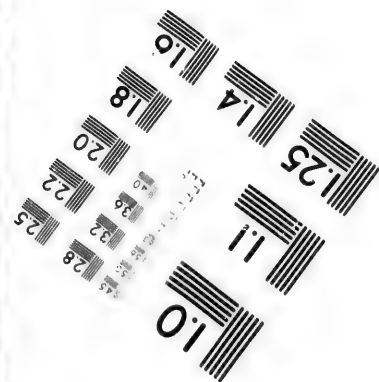
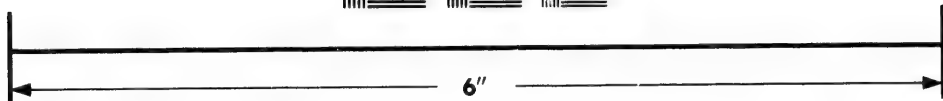
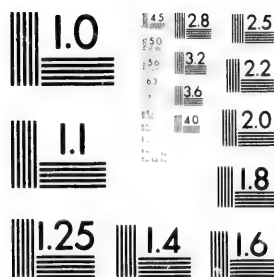
## CHAPTER VII.

### MOTIVES FOR CONFIDENCE IN THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

We have seen that our Blessed Lady is most powerful to obtain graces and favours from God ; but is she ready to assist us ? Will she promptly lend her aid to those who piously invoke it ? Will she turn away from the sinner with disgust, and smile only on the innocent ? Were she to do this, she would not have been proclaimed for ages the Refuge of sinners. Our Blessed Lady is more anxious to obtain grace for sinners than they are to ask it. God is the fountain and source of all grace and light, but he chose the most Holy Virgin as the medium through which to dispense it to man. It is by reason of the Incarnation of the divine Son that Redemption, and all its effects of Faith and Sanctification, have been realized on earth ; and it was through the instrumentality, and with the consent of the Blessed Virgin, that the



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Incarnation was brought about. She was thus constituted the medium, or channel, of God's graces to the human race. This is the unanimous teaching of the Fathers of the Church. In a work of this nature we cannot quote from many; but the words of St. Cyril of Alexandria, delivered a few days after the close of the Council of Ephesus, in which the divine Maternity of our Lady had been solemnly declared, may be taken as expressing the feelings of all. He says: "Through thee heaven exults, the Angels and Archangels rejoice, the demons are put to flight, and man himself is brought back to heaven: through thee people bound by the error of idolatry have been brought to a knowledge of the truth, believers have been baptized, and Churches erected in the whole world: through thy help nations have come to repentance. What more? Through thee the only begotten Son of God, the true Light, shone to those who were seated in darkness, and the shadow of death; through thee the Prophets foretold, through thee the Apostles preached salvation to the nations." (1)

(1) Hom. Contr. Nestor.

Similar words might be quoted from every early christian writer ; but as we will have occasion, in a future chapter, to collect some of the sayings of the Fathers regarding our Lady, we will content ourselves with the foregoing. They may be looked upon as embodying the opinions of the Fathers of the Council of Ephesus, and the belief and traditions of the Church in the early part of the fifth century. They show that all graces came to mankind through the Blessed Virgin. It was a common saying that as Eve, by her disobedience, had injured all ; so our Lady, by her obedience, had benefitted all. And in truth ; when God was passing sentence of death and banishment on our first parents, she was the rainbow of hope to which he bade them look forward. In the Gospel we have clear proofs of her exalted position as the channel of God's grace. For favours from God are either spiritual, or temporal ; they regard either the sanctification of the soul, or the well-being of the body.

Now the first spiritual favour which the Incarnate Son of God conferred on man, was the sanctification of St. John



the Baptist, ere yet either of them had been born. It was through the instrumentality of our Lady that he conferred it. The words of Scripture are unmistakable : Elizabeth, " filled with the Holy Ghost " asserts that " as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in my ears, the infant in my womb leaped for joy." St. John Chrysostom treating of this fact says : " for although Christ reposing in the womb of his mother could have sanctified John as his precursor ; he could not have done it in a manner apparent to all. Therefore he caused Mary to salute Elizabeth, so that the word, proceeding from the bosom of the Mother, where the Lord was indwelling, and passing through the ears of Elizabeth, might descend to John, and thus anoint him as a prophet." (1)

And Origenes writes : " Before Mary had arrived and had saluted Elizabeth, the infant did not rejoice in her womb, but as soon as Mary had spoken the word, which the Son of God, in the womb, suggested to his Mother, the infant exulted for joy, and then first Jesus made his

(1) Hom. 27 in C. 2 Math.

precursor also his prophet" (1). Therefore through the instrumentality of our Lady Jesus conferred his first spiritual favour after his Incarnation. We have already seen that he did his first miracle, viz. changed water into wine, at the instance of his Mother. It is not for an idle purpose that the Gospels so clearly testify that the first favours, both in the spiritual and temporal order, came from the Incarnate God through the medium of his holy Mother. But it is to teach us that through her God dispenses his graces, and to give us motives for confidence in her intercession.

With an eternal love Christ loved us ; for us he suffered and died. All that we had lost through the sin of Adam he superabundantly repaired. The Redemption was like a new and more perfect creation. The fountain that once broke through the earth and watered, with a fruitful stream, the garden of Paradise, was a figure of the blood poured out on Calvary, which was to irrigate and render capable of bearing fruit, the garden of

(1) Hom. VII in Luc.

men's souls. It was divided into four great rivers, running towards the four corners of the earth. The tree of life that bloomed in Eden had withered; but a tree, whose fruit gives life eternal, was planted by the Saviour, when he instituted the Blessed Sacrament. The tree of knowledge too was pointed out.—“I am the way, the truth, and the life.”—The cold winter of sin and darkness passed away, and the world rejoiced in a new spring. This spiritual creation, so to speak, which had been prefigured by the temporal, had also its “Mother of all the living.” The first Eve was, according to the flesh, the Mother of all mankind: in the new and more perfect Creation, a second and more glorious Eve was created, who was to be the spiritual Mother of all. This, then, is the light in which we should look upon our Blessed Lady; she is our Mother. As the mother reconciles the heart of the father to the son, and leads the thoughtless child back to repentance, and to seek the father's pardon, so our heavenly Mother renders God propitious to us, and draws us back from crime to the light of God's love. In the fact that

our Blessed Lady is our Mother we have a supreme and unfailing motive of confidence in her protection. That she is really our Mother we shall now show.

Imagine that you are on mount Calvary, present at the Crucifixion of our Saviour. What a wild and dreadful scene of confusion is before your eyes. The impious rabble shout and curse ; the savage torturers increase their fury, and yell like demons ; the rulers deride and jeer ; and even one of the condemned dying at the Saviour's side, blasphemes—In the meantime Jesus hangs there and suffers for all,—aye, even for those inhuman monsters who rejoice in his agony. The infinite love of a God is there made manifest. Insults, wounds, scourges, bruises, ingratitude,—he has borne them all. And now his sacred blood is fast ebbing away. What more could he do for mankind ? He has immolated himself ; has he aught more to give ? His dying eyes, from which yet shine the immensity of his love, look around as if in search of something. Each bitter scene of his passion is present to his mind ; each sin, from Adam's fall until the Angel's trumpet, is before his

soul ; still he looks to see if he can give yet one last supreme proof of his eternal love. By the Cross stood one who had shared all the sorrows of his lifetime, but who had never come forth from her humble home to have a part in the glory of his earthly triumphs. " Now there stood by the Cross of Jesus his Mother," is the artless pathetic way in which St. John relates our Lady's presence on mount Calvary. She is never introduced in Scripture except to foreshadow, or to confer some benefit on mankind. In Eden God fortells her to give Adam an assurance of Redemption ; Isaias speaks of her as a sign given by God. She is introduced at the time of the Annunciation ; she is present when Elizabeth is to be filled with the Holy Ghost, and John sanctified ; she is at the wedding in Cana of Galilee to induce our Saviour to make a beginning of miracles. When she is now introduced on Calvary it is, as ever before, in the quality of a medium of divine grace. For when the eyes of the dying Saviour rested on her, he saw that one last favour could be done us ; one last proof of his love could be given. Toil and pain,

preaching and praying, life and blood he had freely given. The new Creation was formed, but the spiritual Mother of all its living had not yet be designated. This Jesus-Christ would now do ere his eyes closed in death.

St. John tells us how it was done (c. XIX-26, 27). "When Jesus, therefore, saw his Mother, and the disciple standing whom he loved, he saith to his Mother : Woman, behold thy son. After that he saith to the disciple : Behold thy Mother. And from that hour the disciple took her to his own."

The Holy Gospels do not go out of their way to relate circumstances, except those which are closely allied to the scheme of Redemption. Hence if the Blessed Virgin had merely been given as the spiritual Mother of St. John, we may be quite certain that the act would not have been interwoven with the historic account of our Saviour's passion. Moreover, at the awful moment when Christ spoke the words recorded by his Apostle, his thoughts were of us for whom he was suffering. His undying love, growing stronger, if it were possible, at the ap-

proach of death, looked down the course of ages, and blest all generations with a heavenly Mother, more powerful for good than Eve had been for evil. As Adam represented the human race at the first Creation, so St. John represented it at the second ; and as a carnal Mother of all the living had been given to the former, so a spiritual Mother of all " the living " was given to the latter.

All that is expressed in the highest and best sense by the quality of Mother, became the prerogatives of the Blessed Virgin in our regard, by this solemn act of our dying Lord ; and corresponding duties and privileges of childship were made ours. This is the secret of the yearning of all pure souls towards our Lady ; this she foresaw when she proclaimed — " from henceforth all nations shall call me Blessed." On Calvary, then, just as our divine Redeemer, by his death, gave us a supreme proof of his love, so by leaving us his Mother to be our Mother he gave us a supreme motive of confidence in her patronage.

St. John tells us that, " from that hour the disciple took her to his own." What

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he did has been done by every believer. Our Blessed Lady was present in the Cenacle when the Holy Ghost descended on the Apostles. Thus when the Church was finally chartered for its mission to all nations, she, the Mother of all was present, and received the love and homage of that little band of Christians. Wherever the truths of the Gospel were preached, the story of the Incarnation was told, and Mary, the Mother of Jesus saluted by the Angel as "full of grace," was placed before the faithful as the medium through whom the treasures of God's mercy had descended on earth. And when the scene on Calvary was described by apostolic tongues, Mary, the Mother of Jesus, standing by the Cross was depicted in her agony, and the words of the Saviour to St. John—"Behold thy Mother," were told, both as a proof of our Lord's love, and as a motive of confidence in her intercession. Thus with the spread of Christianity the name and glory of the Blessed Virgin spread also; the Angel's salutation was recited in every tongue; and in every land she was known and honoured under



the endearing name of Mother. Hence, St. Augustine in Africa says : " She only is that Woman who, spiritually, is fully Mother of us the members of Christ." St. Ambrose in Italy exclaims : " If Christ is the brother of all the faithful, why shall not she, who bore Christ, be their Mother ! " St. Epiphanius in Asia wrote : " All generations on the earth had their origin from Eve ; but true life was given to the world by Mary, so that by bearing the giver of life she became Mother of the living " (1). St. Lawrence Justiniani commenting on the words—" Behold thy Mother " makes our Lord say : " John represents the Church which is immaculate and a Virgin. I confide it to you in the person of the disciple. Love it as you have loved me ; strengthen it by your exhortations ; confirm it by your advice ; teach it by your example... I wish you to have it for the future as a son ; protect it by your prayers... I will command it to revere you as a Mother, to have recourse to you, to make you a mediator between God and itself. It shall invoke you in

(1) Hæres, 78.

dangers, shall consult you in doubts, shall implore your aid in its necessities... I shall cause all to have recourse to you, and your name shall be honoured from generation to generation. No one who invokes you shall be spurned ; and no one devout to you will be rejected by me. With an indissoluble bond of Charity I bind you to it, and it to you " (1). These beautiful words, glowing with love for God and love for our Lady, should be studied and taken to heart by every Christian.

Thus from every part of the Christian world voices arise proclaiming that Mary is our Mother, and proving that the devotion which Catholics in our day profess for her is not greater, but rather less, than that which the early Christians had for the Mother of the crucified. The words of a God spoken on Calvary have echoed through the world and borne their fruit. The example of the disciple who "took her to his own" has been followed by all those who profess the Faith he preached. Just as in the natural order there is an

(1) De Triumph. Christi Agone, Tom. 1.

instinct which causes the child to turn in all dangers to its Mother, so, in the order of grace, the faithful, in temptations, or trials, fly to their heavenly Mother. The father is stronger than the mother to shield from harm, yet it is not to him the frightened child runs; so, too, God is infinitely more powerful than our Blessed Lady, but the instinct of childhood, implanted in our nature by our Saviour's words on the Cross, makes us fly to her in time of danger.

Those who are puzzled at the depth of devotion which good children of the Church have for our Lady, may learn its cause both from this, and from the words of Wisdom: "And he who created me rested in my tabernacle, and said to me: in Israel dwell, and fix thy roots in my elect." These words prefigure the Blessed Virgin in whose chaste bosom her Creator was to rest, and whom he was to fix deeply in the love and affections of his chosen children. Thus it has come to pass that the greatest lovers of God have been the greatest lovers of Mary. In all God's elect she has fixed deeply her roots, and where love for her is not, the soil

is not that which produces the Elect.

Mary is then our Mother. Consoling thought! The Mother of Jesus is my Mother, left to me by Jesus himself. Through her he dispenses his favours; and as if to remove all hesitation on our part, and to make our approach to her easy and natural, he said—"Behold thy Mother." O my sweet Mother, teach me to love Jesus; pray for me in dangers; uphold me in difficulties, console me in death. Thou art my Mother; this is my strong motive of confidence in thee.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### FAVOURS RECEIVED AT THE HANDS OF OUR LADY.

There is one fact in the history of the Church clear to the eyes of all who do not seek to blind themselves, viz., the faithful, in all ages, have practised devotion towards the Blessed Virgin, and have had unbounded confidence in her intercessory power. This is evident from what has already been written, and will be still further confirmed in the next chapter. Since, therefore, this belief in the power of our Lady is constant and universal, there must be some external motives, some visible reasons, which give evidence to the frequent exercise of that power on behalf of man. It would be the merest trifling to say that the deep, passionate, earnest devotion of untold millions of Christians, for eighteen centuries, had no guarantee in the teachings of Faith; or that the constant recourse, by these

same millions, to the intercession of the Mother of God, had not been warranted by well known facts. As a proof, then, of our Lady's benevolence towards us, and as an encouragement to those who are in affliction or danger, we shall cull, from history, a few accounts of favours conferred by the Blessed Virgin. From some of them it will be seen what was the opinion of many of the holiest and most learned men, in the early ages of the Church, regarding our Lady. True Catholics will read these accounts, solemn as voices from the tombs of the sainted dead, with loving confidence : those who are not Catholics would do well to ponder on the lesson taught, and see if they or we profess the Religion of the early Church. In a work of this nature we can give but few facts, and must condense their recital. Fain would we, if these pages might be extended, make both this, and the succeeding chapter more full. As it is we can only take out half pence from the unlimited treasury of guineas.

We have already pointed out that the Gospels relate two wonderful graces conferred through the instrumentality of the

Blessed Virgin ; viz., the sanctification of St. John the Baptist, and the converting of water into wine. They also bear testimony to the fact that through her we received the greatest of all blessings, Jesus-Christ our Redeemer. Hence it was that Christians learnt her power, loved her sweet compassion, and had confidence in her intercession. Hence, too, they learned to make her divine maternity the grand argument against all heresies which denied either the Humanity, or the Divinity of our Saviour.

St. Gregory Nisenus relates of St. Gregory, Bishop of Neocæserea, known as Thaumaturgus, or *miracle worker*, the following. Almost against his will Gregory was made Bishop of Neocæserea, the inhabitants of which were nearly all pagans. This was in the third century. Trembling at the awful responsibility thus imposed on him, the new Bishop retired for a few days into solitude, and implored God to enable him to understand, as much as man might, the divine mysteries of Religion. One night, when greatly troubled in soul at the thought of his duties, there appeared to him an old

man of venerable appearance and surpassing beauty. Gregory asked who he was, and whence he came. The old man assured him that God had sent him to solve his doubts, and to reveal clearly the truths of Faith. Gregory, reassured by his amiability, prepared to listen to his words ; but the old man pointed in an opposite direction, and made a sign for him to look that way. Turning his eyes in the direction indicated, Gregory was amazed at beholding a majestic Lady, lovely beyond all conception. She and the old man began to talk between themselves about the very thing which had been the cause of his perplexity, and from their conversation he was fully instructed. He learnt their names, too ; for the Lady invited " John the Evangelist " to instruct fully the young Bishop ; and he said that he was ready to do the will of the " Mother of his Lord. " After the instruction the vision disappeared. This is the relation of St. Gregory of Nyssa, who adds that the Bishop Gregory wrote down, at once, the heaven-given explanation of Faith, and that the autograph copy was in the Church of Neocæsarea.



Baronius says that such a rule of Faith was known in the Eastern and Western Church, and three centuries later, in a General Council at Constantinople, was read as an oracle of true Faith.

The next account which we will give is taken from Nicephorus (1). Shortly before the year 460 Leo, a Thracian by birth, and a captain in the army, was walking one day near a forest, when he heard a plaintive cry for help. Finding that it came from the thickest part of the woods, he made his way forward : and found a blind man who had lost his path, and who was becoming more and more entangled in the depths of the forest. Leo took him by the arm, and kindly led him to the road, clearing all obstacles as he went from the blindman's path. Having brought him to the public road, he was about to leave him, when the unfortunate man begged his deliverer to get him a drink. Leo looked around ; the season was dry, and the country arid. There appeared no hope of procuring water ; nevertheless Leo, prompted by charity,

(1) Hist. Eccl. Lib. XV, c. 25.

again entered the wood. He searched in vain for a long time. At last he heard some one calling, "Leo, Leo." Looking up he saw no one ; but again he heard the voice saying : " Come in a little further and you will find both water and mud : with the water you will quench the blind man's thirst, and with the mud you will restore his sight. And know now that for this act of charity you will be master of the Empire ; and I wish that then you, mindful of the favour, shall erect in honour of me, Mary, a sumptuous temple on the spot where the water now is." Astonished at the words Leo took some water in his helmet, and a little mud in his hand. He quenched the thirst of the blind man, and restored his sight. A few days after Marcian, the Emperor, died without issue, and Leo was unanimously chosen as his successor.

The third narrative is taken from the Dialogues of Gregory the Great, that learned and holy Pope whose name and fame shall be undying in the annals of the human race. He lived in the last part of the sixth century, and the first of the seventh. In Book IV, c. 7 of his

Dialogues he relates this account which he received from a holy man Probus, brother of the girl in question. There was a young girl named Musa, innocent in manners, but of a lively disposition, and greatly given to feminine foibles. In her shone the brightness of that innocence which adorned her soul, but which was slightly dimmed and deformed by vanity. The heavenly Bridegroom who loves to see his earthly spouses without spot or wrinkle, wished to effect her amendment, and chose his divine Mother as the medium. One day the girl had a vision in which our Lady, surrounded by a numerous choir of holy Virgins, appeared before her. Astonished at the sight Musa wished to approach nearer, and to mingle with the throng, but respect and a feeling of unworthiness kept her back. The Blessed Virgin encouraged her, and asked her if she were desirous of being joined to that noble band. Musa replied: "Most willingly and with all my heart." Mary answered that if she wished to be one of that company she must correct her little faults, and if she did this, she might be sure that at the

end of thirty days she would be numbered with that band of holy virgins. The vision vanished, and Musa was profoundly moved. She became ashamed of her past folly, and resolved to change her conduct. She abandoned the society of her youthful companions ; sought reclusion, and became thoughtful and grave. Her friends wondering at the change, asked its cause, whereupon she frankly and with simplicity of heart related the vision. Their surprise was great, but the event verified the prediction ; for after twenty-five days Musa was taken sick. On the thirtieth day Mary appeared again, surrounded by the same brilliant train, and with a pleasing countenance invited her to join them. Musa overjoyed, with modest reverence closed her eyes saying : " Behold I come, behold I come," and calmly expired.

Although these narratives prove beyond a doubt the sentiments of our forefathers in the Faith ; still some may say that there is no good evidence to support them. They prove, however, the belief of these holy men in the power of our Lady, and show that in every age, from Christ till now, the faithful practised the same

devotion towards her, and had the same confidence in her, as we of to-day. But we have a more striking account of our Lady's intercessory power in the life of St. John of Damascus. The writings of this Saint are filled with the praises of the Blessed Virgin ; he speaks as one who in a wonderful manner received favours at her hand. The account we are going to give is related by John, Patriarch of Jerusalem. He says :

John of Damascus was a native of that city, and was fully versed in sacred and profane learning. The Prince of Damascus, although a Saracen, loved and honoured him. At that time Leo Isauricus was Emperor of Constantinople, and a declared enemy of holy images and the true Faith. St. John of Damascus wrote zealously in favour of the truth, and strove to bring back the erring. The Emperor, desirous of getting rid of so powerful an adversary, had a letter written in which the handwriting of the Saint was cleverly imitated. This forged epistle purported to come from John to the Emperor, and contained an offer of delivering up Damascus to him. Leo sent

this forgery to the Prince of Damascus who was naturally indignant at the supposed treachery of one in whom he reposed confidence. Sending for the Saint he bitterly upbraided him, and without listening to explanations, ordered his right hand to be cut off, and to be hung up on the public square. This was immediately done. After a little time John sent some friends to the Prince praying that he would at least let them bring back his hand. His petition was granted. The Saint having received the hand, fell prostrate before an image of our Lady, and besought her with tears to restore the hand to its place; he reminded her that any favour she would ask of her Divine Son would be granted, and he promised that if his hand were made whole he would use it to promote the glory of Jesus and devotion to her. Praying thus he placed the hand on the stump of the wrist and appeared to fall asleep. At the same time he heard the Blessed Virgin saying: "Behold, your hand that was cut off is restored to its former state; use it in future as you have done in the past." In coming to his senses the Saint

saw that the hand was joined to the arm, but there remained a visible mark of the amputation. All were greatly astonished ; and the Saracen Prince, recognizing in this the innocence of his former friend, wished to load him with new honours.— Little wonder that this Saint should write as he did regarding our Blessed Lady.

In reading these accounts from the centuries which passed before the middle ages began, the catholic soul overleaps the intervening years and finds itself at home, so to speak, with the devotions and pious customs of the early Church. Were space at our disposal we might come down, age by age, and find the same loving record of favours bestowed on her devout clients by the divine Mother. To show, however, that the golden chain of graces received has not been broken, we will give, in substance, an account which may be read in full in "*Storia dei Santuari di Maria*," vol. 2, by Ricardi. It is an official letter, sent by the Lieutenant-Colonel of a regiment, to his superior officer, stating in plain and soldier-like style what happened to one of the men under his command. It is dated—Massa

Ducale, 28th May 1836. He begins by reminding his superior that in his previous report, No. 207, he informed him that one of the soldiers had entirely lost his sight, and that he, when visiting the hospital on the day of his former report, could scarcely bear to look at the man's eyes which he opened with his fingers, seeing in them only "two bloody wounds set between two disgusting cavities." He then relates how the surgeon of the hospital Bianchini, and another one named Tedeschi who was called in, had treated the man, but that now for ten or twelve days had desisted, declaring that it was impossible for the profession to help the unfortunate soldier. Here, then, we have the assertion of two surgeons that the man was hopelessly blind. The letter of the Lieut.-Colonel goes on to say that the soldier continued in this state, and for twenty days all hope had been abandoned, and the poor fellow was exhorted to make up his mind to bear patiently his severe trial. But Bertozzi, the blind soldier, being assured that human power was vain to aid him, placed his hopes of a cure in the intercession of the Blessed



Virgin, and begged to be conducted to a celebrated shrine called "Our Lady of the Oaks." At the request of the Captain Mantovani the surgeon consented to his going out, for he felt that neither sun, nor dust could any longer injure the blind soldier. Accordingly on 25th May, at 2:30 p.m., two comrades conducted him to the shrine. We will give what followed in the words of the letter itself: "Bertozzi having arrived at the altar of Mary prostrated himself in humble supplication. He invoked with fervour the Consoler of the afflicted, and after about ten minutes of ardent prayer, a tremor of his whole body seized on him (they are his own words), a flood of warm tears began to flow from his wasted eyes, and his very hands felt the painful sensation caused by the hot tears falling on them: and whilst he was wiping away the tears with a handkerchief, he raised the sunken and disfigured pupils of his eyes towards the picture of the Virgin and saw, O! wonderful prodigy, he saw the silken curtain of various colours that covered it, and called out that he saw it, and exclaimed that Mary Most Holy had ob-

tained from God the miracle of the restoration of his sight. He besought them to draw aside the curtain and to expose to view the sacred picture. This was done in the presence of the Chaplain of the place, of two Capuchin Fathers, of Doctors Guidoni and Pellegrini, and of twelve or fifteen other persons there assembled. Scarcely had the picture been unveiled than he saw the countenance, the crown, the dress, then the Infant Jesus, then St. Anthony, &c., and in less than three minutes was able to perfectly distinguish the smallest objects placed before him. He recognized the persons who surrounded him, and I myself, informed of the fact, having arrived and touched him slightly on the shoulder, was at once known; as were also the Military Chaplain and the Surgeon Tedeschi whom I caused to be brought to the place.

There are no words to describe what one feels in being a witness to so signal a prodigy: the emotion of the fortunate man who by instantaneous, miraculous divine grace, passed from total blindness to the recovery of sight is unspeakable: it is impossible to give an idea of the

feelings excited in the hearts, and depicted on the countenances of the bystanders: I shall only say that we were all transported by a sweet ecstasy of wonder, and filled with devotion towards Mary, as also with contrition and gratitude towards the most merciful God; so much so that the whole garrison and city are still thrilled by the wonderful event.

Yesterday morning I conducted the regular troops to a mass of thanksgiving in the Church of the Virgin at the Oaks, and Bertozzi went there alone, made his Confession and Communion, and the edification was universal.

A few more lines follow and the letter is signed.

The Lieutenant-Colonel,  
SIGISMONDO FERRARI KNIGHT.

It is not for us, but for the Church to decide whether, or not, this was really a miracle obtained through the intercession of our Lady. It is easy to see what the brave Lieut. Col. and those who were present thought of the matter. It must be a very stolid and unenviable form of in-

tellect which can think itself right only by thinking every one else wrong.

Our last narrative shall be one to inspire small practises of devotion towards our Lady in order to obtain a good death. It is taken from a letter of the Vicar Apostolic of Texas 1841. A Lady in Maryland on leaving her home to go to Texas was given a medal of the Blessed Virgin by her Confessor, who exhorted her never to omit the short prayer.—“O ! Mary conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee.” She faithfully followed this advice. For four years she had been stretched on a sick bed in Texas, and more that once they thought her dying ; but her confidence in Mary Immaculate made her hope to have the happiness of receiving the last Sacraments before death. As soon as she heard of my arrival she sent for me, and having received the last rites, expired a few days after, full of consolation and gratitude towards her sovereign Benefactress.

It is a long time from the first ages of the Church until today ; still devotion towards our Lady has ever been the same. Truly did she say : “ Behold from hence-

forth all nations shall call me blessed."  
And truly did Elizabeth "filled with the  
Holy Ghost" exclaim—"Blessed art thou  
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## CHAPTER IX.

### OUR LADY AS SEEN BY THE FATHERS.

There is, perhaps, no fallacy more widespread amongst those who are without the Catholic Church, than the belief that devotion towards the Blessed Virgin is of modern growth. The misapprehension on this point is simply amazing. Men who have a reputation for learning may be found who boldly assert that, both in the Scriptures and in the early Church, the divine Mother is rather snubbed than otherwise. Surely these persons never read the writings about which they speak so glibly. We would rather believe them pretentious than absolutely malicious. They must be one or the other. Those who have neither time, nor opportunity for study, naturally give credence to what they see advanced with so much assurance. Thus it has come to pass that the great body of Protestants almost shudder at the name of our Lady ; they imagine

she is a modern usurper, set upon a throne as a rival of the Most High. They will scarcely give heed to us when we assure them we do not adore her ; and they actually smile with derision when we assert that we do no more than was always done in the Church ; and that our words of love and devotion are but faint echoes of the voices which rose in prayer in the Catacombs, or that boldly confessed Christ amidst the horrors of the Amphitheatre. And yet this is the simple truth. Our Blessed Lady is the Eve of the new and glorious creation of grace, effected by the death of Christ : and just as the first Eve must ever be associated with our carnal life, and the sad story of Man's fall ; so Mary, the second Eve, must permeate the spiritual Creation, and be linked forever with the records of its unspeakable glory. Take away Eve, and the human race has never been : so, take away Mary, and the spiritual generations of redeemed are no more. Thus the Blessed Virgin is no accidental part of Creation ; she is not one who like us, might have been, or might not have been, without disturbing the order of the others.

She is the keystone of the spiritual arch ; she cannot be removed else it will all fall, for without her there would be no Redeemer, and no Redemption. This is the way in which we ought to look upon her : this is the way in which she was looked upon since Adam's last day in Eden. She was ever the grand central figure around which were grouped the wonderous events of man's release from the power of Satan.

In order that each one may see, in a small compass, the way in which our Lady has ever been looked upon, we will collect a few striking expressions regarding her. It will be only a drop from the ocean ; still it will, we trust, afford our readers sufficient material for defending the antiquity and lawfulness of the honour which Catholics pay to our loving Mother.

First of all we have the Eternal Father in Paradise foretelling her coming, and describing her power : speaking to the seducer of our first parents he said : " I will put enmity between thee and the Woman ; and thy seed and her seed ; she shall crush thy head." As we have al-



ready shown the Woman here referred to is the Blessed Virgin ; and even if it be read—he shall crush thy head, it will ever be true that either directly, or indirectly through her Son, the Woman, i. e. the Blessed Virgin is to obtain a victory over Satan. Before creating the first Eve God said : “ Let us make him (Adam) a help-like unto himself.” But he foretells that this second Eve shall be greater than a helpmate “ like unto himself ;” for she will triumph over his deadly enemy.

The Prophet Isaias (c. 7) gives her on the part of God himself as a sign of victory to the house of David. When Achaz the king would not ask for a sign, the Prophet says : “ The Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold a Virgin shall conceive, and shall bring forth a Son, and his name shall be called Emanuel.” God has not forgotten the Woman about whom he had spoken in Paradise, but gives her anew, through his Prophet, as a sign of victory.

But this wonderful Woman came at length into the world ; and the Angel Gabriel was sent from God to her. We read in Scripture of Angels having been

sent to other persons, but we never read such elevated words of praise. We find, (Luke c. I. v. 26 & seq.) that the Angel Gabriel was "sent from God," and he was sent to a Virgin, "and the name of the Virgin was Mary. And the Angel, being come in, said to her: Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee: Blessed art thou amongst Women." Evidently God's ambassador had not received a command to snub our Lady: through him God spoke, and the victory promised in Eden was now fast maturing. But the Angel added more; he said: "Fear not, Mary; for thou hast found grace with God." And then after other words which show the foundation and measure of her greatness he adds: "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee; and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee." Then the Gospel history goes on to relate that this Virgin went to visit her cousin Elizabeth about whom the Angel had spoken. It tells us that she entered into the house of Zachary, and saluted Elizabeth. "And it came to pass, that when Elizabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the infant leaped in her womb: and Elizabeth was filled

with the Holy Ghost : And she cried out with a loud voice, and said : Blessed art thou among women ; and blessed is the fruit of thy womb. And whence is this to me that the Mother of my Lord should come to me." Clearly Elizabeth, who was "filled with the Holy Ghost," had no mean opinion of our Lady. She did not treat her, nor speak of her, as too many do. She was overcome by the condescension of the Mother of her Lord in coming to visit her. She, the Mother of the Baptist who was "more than Prophet," joyfully recognized the more sublime dignity of the humble Virgin, and proclaimed "with a loud voice" her praise. And Mary herself who was "full of grace," who was "Blessed among women," set the seal of perpetuity on these praises when she said in her noble Cantic—  
"Behold, from henceforth all nations shall call me blessed. For he that is mighty hath done great things to me." Any one reading the first Chapter of St. Luke must surely be struck with the greatness, the glory, and the unheard of praise of the Blessed Virgin. And the praise is spoken, and the glory is made

known, by an Angel "sent from God," and by one "filled with the Holy Ghost ;" and their words are transmitted to us by an Evangelist. God speaks the praise, and his inspired one has written it down. Surely, then, the greatness and glory of the divine Mother are clearly manifested in Scripture.

Our Saviour gave perfection to the Law ; he founded a Church through which God was henceforth to speak to man. This Church exists with an unbroken succession and tradition from Christ until our own day. Its first members saw our Lord and listened to his words : they saw our Lady, and received the Holy Ghost in her presence. They went forth to preach blest by her ; and teaching the Incarnation they taught her glory. Those who succeeded them in their ministry of preaching, proclaimed the same doctrine ; and in this way an unbroken series of divinely constituted teachers has been verified. Many things were written that have perished ; but from each century of the early Church we will collect a few sentences of great writers, most of them holy men who did and suffered much for

Christ, from which it will be seen that Mary's glory, as recorded in Scripture, filled the Church, and that devotion towards her was in the every day life of the faithful, just as it now is.

1<sup>st</sup> Century. Excepting the Holy Scriptures, we have scarcely any other Christian writings of this century. We have seen how the Gospels bear witness to our Lady's greatness, and how an Angel "sent from God," and a holy woman "filled with the Holy Ghost" addressed her. St. John of Damascus tells us that there was an ancient tradition that all the Apostles, except St. Thomas, were present when our Lady died, and that her body was borne to the sepulchre with Angelic and apostolic psalmody; and that for three days Angel voices were heard around her tomb in Gethsemani. After three days the song of the Angels ceased, and St. Thomas having arrived, they opened the tomb but there was no trace of her body. He adds that Timothy to whom St. Paul wrote, and Dionysius who was converted by the preaching of St. Paul in the Areopagus at Athens, were also present; and he quotes from a letter

written by Dionysius to Timothy the following words : " For when we, as you know, were with the Bishops sanctified by the spirit of God, he (that is Hierotheus about whom he is writing) with many others of our holy brethen, was present, to view the body *which gave to the world the principle of Life and bore a God* : there were also present James the brother of the Lord, and Peter the supreme and most venerable master of theologians ; and the *sacred body* being seen, all, in as much as they were able, celebrated with hymns the goodness of the Divine Power " (1). This is how Apostles, and Apostolic men, honoured our Lady.

2<sup>nd</sup> Century. St. Clement who is mentioned by St. Paul in one of his Epistles, says : " It was the womb of a holy Virgin that bore our Lord Jesus-Christ the Son of God : and the body which our Lord assumed, and in which he suffered, he took from a holy Virgin " (2).

St. Ignatius who is thought by some very early writers to be the child whom

(1) 2 Orat. de Dormit. Deiparæ.

(2) Letter 3 Sec. VI.

our Lord (Math. XVIII, 2) called unto him, and "set him in the midst of them"; and who certainly was a disciple of St. John, writes: "There is only one physician... God existing in flesh, in true life immortal, both from Mary and from God" (1). And (c. 18). "For our God Jesus-Christ was borne in the womb of Mary." Finally he asserts her virginity (c. 19) saying: "the Prince of this world did not know the virginity of Mary." Alas! are there any now calling themselves Christians who, like the "Prince of this world" do not know the virginity of Mary. This holy Saint proclaims the dignity of our Lady as Mother of God, and vindicates her title of Virgin Mother.

St. Justin called, on account of his learning, the Philosopher, shows the superiority of Mary over Eve: "Eve whilst yet a Virgin and undefiled, having listened to the voice of the serpent, brought forth disobedience and death: but the Virgin Mary having received with Faith and joy the glad annunciation of the Angel Gabriel that the Spirit of the Lord should

(1) Ad. Eph. c. 7.

come upon her, and the power of the Most High overshadow her, replied, be it done unto me according to thy word : and from her was born the one (foretold by many prophecies) through whom God crushed the serpent &c. (1). And as if to rebuke, in advance, those who fain would make us believe that Christ belittled his Mother says : "God had not chosen for Mother of Christ any *common* woman, but *one who should surpass all others in virtue*. It was not therefore unreasonable that he should wish his Mother to be called Blessed by reason of those virtues, through which she was held worthy to become a Virgin Mother. That in reality Christ never spoke with disrespect, or acted with disobedience is evident from the words of the Evangelist Luke, testifying that Christ went down with them from Jerusalem, and was subject to them" (2). See how he exalts her, and how lovingly he defends her. What would he think of those who now assail her honour and glory ?

(1) Dial. cum Tryph. N. 100.

(2) Quæst. et Resp. ad Orthod. c. 136.



St. Irenæus a disciple of St. Polycarp, who was a disciple of St. John, writes : "As Eve by disobedience became the cause of death both to herself and to the whole human race, so the Virgin Mary by obedience, bearing the one promised, became the cause of Salvation to herself and to all mankind... What the Virgin Eve had bound by incredulity, the Virgin Mary loosened by Faith" (1). And (Lib. v. c. 19). "Thus Eve produced a guilty generation condemned to death until from Mary, Mother of God, was born a new generation... She was led to obey God and thus the Virgin Mary became the Advocate of the Virgin Eve." We, therefore, and not those who differ from us in Religion, use the words of this great Saint when we call Mary our Advocate.

3<sup>rd</sup> Century. St. Clement of Alexandria compares our Lady to the Church : "Wonderful mystery ! The Father of all things is one ; the World is one, the Holy Ghost is one, and he is everywhere. One, also, is the Virgin Mother, and I rejoice to figure her as the Church. This one

(1) *Contra Hæres.* L. III. C. 33.

Mother did not cease to be a Virgin ; she is at the same time Virgin and Mother ; undefiled as a Virgin, but loving as a Mother : calling her children to her side she feeds them with holy milk, viz., with the Word become her child " (1).

Origenes (Hom. VI in Luc.) speaking of the Angel's words—"hail full of grace," says : "For Mary alone is this salutation reserved." And (Hom. VII in Luc.) he proves from the words of Elizabeth that our Saviour could never have slighted, or reproved, as some early heretics asserted, his divine Mother. He writes : "Elizabeth filled with the Holy Ghost said : Blessed art thou among women. If Mary is pronounced Blessed by the Holy Ghost how could the Saviour deny her ?" (Hom. IX) Speaking of Mary's visit to Elizabeth, and that at the sound of Mary's voice Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost, he says : "If in one hour she (Elizabeth) had gained so much, we may conjecture how much John gained in three months by Mary's presence with Elizabeth." We can judge from this his opinion of our

(1) *Pædag.* L. I c. VI.

Lady's power and greatness. Finally, censuring those who spoke in an unbecoming manner of our Holy Mother he says : " Do you not seem to hear those who in a tavern speak with contumely, and vituperate others, without attending to what is decent or becoming " (1).

St. Archelaus wrote : " As the Law and the Prophets are contained in the double precept of Charity, so all our hope hinges on the birth (of Christ) from Mary " (2).

We may refer in this century to the account given in the preceding Chapter of the apparition of our Lady to St. Gregory of Neocæsarea, as showing the belief of the third century in our Lady's power.

Tertullian writes : " Eve listened to the serpent ; Mary to the Angel Gabriel. What the former contracted by her credulity the latter blotted out by her belief... Mary bore Him who one day would save his carnal brother Israel, who would be also his slayer " (3).

(1) *Contra Celsum* L. 1. 39.

(2) See Mœhler *Patrolog.*

(3) *De Carne Christi* c. 17.

4<sup>th</sup> Century. After the victory of Constantine in 312, and the restoration of peace to the Church which had been persecuted for three centuries, naturally there were more Christian writers. We can only quote from a few, but they are a sample of the rest.

St. Ephrem the glory of Syria thus prayed: "O Mother of unfailing light, my glorious Lady, Mary Virgin, hear the prayers and the sighs of one calling to thee from the night of sin, from the darkness of the shadow of death. I, wretch that I am, turned away from God; I strayed from the Angels, and from the region of light and peace have been deservedly excluded. It is wonderful how God endured my sins, and did not cast me alive into hell. But thou, most loving Lady, didst preserve life to me a lost sinner, awaiting my repentance, and seeking my salvation. Give me, therefore, my benign Lady, compunction and sorrow of heart: give unceasing sighs to my breast, and flowing tears to my eyes, so that washed and cleaned in the saving flood I may again merit to see the divine light of thy serene countenance.

Let me see thee with the eyes of my soul, O Immaculate, and let the dark night of my death be turned into the joyful day of my salvation. Thou canst obtain anything thou dost wish from that God whom thou didst bear in an ineffable manner. O ! Mother of God exceeding all thought, and all power of speech, &c." This was the language of Saints in the fourth century. May not sinners use it today ?

St. Gregory of Nazianzum surnamed the Theologian, said : " If any one does not confess Holy Mary to be Mother of God, he does not recognize the Divinity " (1).

St. Ambrose puts her before our eyes as a model of all virtue. He says : Let the virginity of the life of Mary be ever pictured before you. From it you can take a model for your life, for in it the full teaching of every virtue, seen as in a mirror, will show what you ought to correct, what to do, and what to hold. The nobility of the master is the most efficacious incentive to study. What more noble than the mother of God ? What

(1) Labbe Conc. Eph.

more illustrious than she whom the Splendor itself elected? What more chaste than she who brought forth without corruption? What need have I to speak of her other virtues? She was a Virgin not only in body but in mind, far removed from every guile that might corrupt the purity of her affections: humble of heart, thoughtful in speech, prudent, little given to talk, diligent in sacred studies. She did not place her hope in the uncertainty of riches, but in the prayer of the poor: attentive to work, modest in conversation, anxious to have God, not man, as the judge of her actions... When did she even by a glance offend her parents, or quarrel with her friends? When did she despise the lowly? or mock at the weak? or avoid the needy? She only frequented these assemblages of men in which mercy need not blush, and modesty need not be put to flight. There was nothing unamiable in her look; nothing bold in her speech; nothing indelicate in her actions. There was no affectation in her manner, there was nothing undignified in her walk, there was nothing of haughty arrogance in her voice: thus the bearing of

her body was an image of her mind, and an expression of every virtue " (1). Who has ever praised our Lady more than this great and holy Father of the Church? His words serve to show what Christians in the fourth Century thought of the Blessed Virgin, and, perhaps, they may induce some women to imitate her.

St. Augustine wrote of our Lady : " She alone is that woman who fully became the spiritual Mother of us the members of Christ ; for by her charity she cooperated in the birth of the faithful in the Church, who are members of its Head, of whom she is corporally the Mother " (2).

St. Athanasius says : " Because Christ is King and Lord, the Mother who bore him is rightly called Queen and Lady " (3).

St. Jerome the profound expounder of Holy Scripture thus writes : " How much and how great may be the glorious Mary ever Virgin, is divinely declared by the Angel saying—Hail ! full of grace ; the

(1) Lib. 2 de Virg. c. 2.

(2) L. de S. Virg. c. 6.

(3) Ler. de B. M. V.

Lord is with thee ; Blessed art thou amongst women. It was fitting that the Virgin should be so enriched with gifts as to be full of grace, the Virgin who gave glory to the heavens, the Lord to the earth ; who brought forth peace, faith to the gentiles, an end to vice, order to life, and discipline to morals. And well was she called 'full' of grace ; because whilst to others it is given in part, to Mary the whole plenitude of grace was infused... There came to Mary, though in a different way, the plenitude of all the grace which is in Christ... And thus whatever of malediction was brought on by Eve was taken away by the blessing of Mary " (1). What writer of modern times has equalled this praise ?

St. Basil commenting on the words— " Hail full of grace"—writes : " Be joyful, for from thee the joy of all will be born, and he, dissolving the power of death, and giving to all the hope of the resurrection, will blot out the ancient curse. Hail full of grace, unfading paradise of innocence in which the tree of

(1) Orat. in Assumpt.



life being planted will bring forth fruit of salvation to all (1).

5<sup>th</sup> Century. Instead of quoting from writers of this century, we will narrate a fact of Church History which will speak for itself. About the year 427 Nestorius became Patriarch of Constantinople. After a little time he began to deny that our Lady should be called "Mother of God," asserting that she did not bring forth the Creator, but only a man who was the instrument of divinity. Like many in our day he did not master the idea of the Incarnation. He did not grasp the fact that the one divine person was both God and man; that the Word born of the Father from all eternity, was born again, according to the flesh, from the Virgin. Here again we see how a correct knowledge of our Lady's attributes saves us from error. When we proclaim her "Mother of God" we at once profess that Christ is true God and true man,—not merely a man highly favoured by God, as many in our day would wish us to believe. The discourses of Nestorius,

(1) Apud Combifis, tom. I Auct.

so opposed to the belief of all the faithful, caused great confusion at Constantinople. He was looked upon as a heretic, and avoided by priests and people. Soon his discourses spread over the East, and into Egypt. But there was in Alexandria a Bishop who was equal to the occasion. It was St. Cyril. He took up the cause of true Faith, and the honour of our Lady. He made known to Pope Celestine the errors and wiles of Nestorius. Finally a General Council was convoked at Ephesus. In it the teaching of Nestorius was condemned, and he himself deposed from his See, and cut off as a rotten branch from the sacred ministry. During the sitting of the Council the whole Catholic world was excited. On the last day of the Session, which lasted from morning until after dark, the people of Ephesus stood without awaiting the decision. Were they to cease from calling our Lady "Mother of God," or was the infalliable decree of a General Council to consecrate its use? This was the thought that filled the minds of all, and it shows us the jealous love of our fore-fathers for our Blessed Lady. When at length it was announced that

Nestorius was deposed, and Mary proclaimed true Mother of God, the air was rent with the glad shouts of the people, and voices of praise and thanksgiving filled the night. The Bishops on coming forth from the Council Chamber were greeted with wild acclamations of delight. They were accompanied to their homes by men bearing lighted torches ; women walked ahead swinging censers of rich perfume ; lights gleamed from every house, and flowers were scattered on the streets. It was a night of triumph ; a triumph of truth over error,—of our Lady's honour over her impious assailants, and the Catholic world rejoiced. St Cyril who had laboured for this was able to joyful exclaim :

“I behold the assemblage of all the holy ones, who have promptly come together, called by the ever holy Virgin Mary Mother of God, now rejoicing. Be praise and glory to thee, O Holy Trinity, who hast gathered us all to this celebration. Be, also, praise to thee, O Holy Mother of God. Thou art the precious gem of the whole world, the inextinguishable Lamp, the crown of Virginity, the

sceptre of true Faith, the indissoluable temple containing Him who can never be bounded by space... Through thee the Trinity is glorified ; through thee the saving Cross is made known and adored throughout the whole world " (1). These were the sentiments of the Church in the fifth Century. They are the sentiments of the Church of today :

Lest our quotations should seem too long in proportion to the rest of the work, we will only quote one, or two authors, from each succeeding century. The chain will be unbroken ; the links may, perhaps, on another occasion, be multiplied.

6<sup>th</sup> Century. One of the grandest figures among that grandest of groups, the Popes of Rome, is Gregory the Great, to whom England owes her Christianity and her civilization. Even as he spoke to the remote ancestors of Englishmen through St. Augustine, he now speaks to the men of today through his imperishable writings. Here is what was taught in England, regarding our Lady, in the sixth century. Speaking of the mountain

(1) Hom. Cont. Nestor.

of Ephraim mentioned in the first Chapter of the first Book of Kings, he says :

We can understand by this mountain the most Blessed Mary ever Virgin, Mother of God. She was, indeed, a mountain, for by the dignity of her calling she transcended the height of every chosen creature. Was not, in truth, Mary a lofty mountain who, in order that she might be, fitted for the conception of the Eternal Word, raised the apex of her merits above all the choirs of Angels, to the throne of God itself? The dignity of this most excellent mountain the Prophet Isaias foretold, saying : In the last days the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be prepared on the top of mountains : She was, indeed, a mountain on the top of mountains, for the grandeur of Mary shone above that of all the Saints."

To express her sublime dignity he could find no more fitting expression than that of a "mountain on the top of mountains."

7<sup>th</sup> Century : Sophronius of Jerusalem wrote :

"Who can speak thy glory? Who shall attempt to tell in words the Prodigy that

thou art ? Who so vain as to think he can relate thy greatness ? Thou didst adorn human nature ; thou didst rise above the orders of Angels : thou didst cast into the shade the brightness of the Archangels : thou didst sit above the sublime seats of the Thrones : thou wast above the height of the Dominations : thou didst take precedence of the leaders of the Princes : thou wast stronger than the might of the Powers : thou, with mortal eyes, didst exceed the penetrating vision of the Cherubim : with the wings of thy soul divinely moved thou didst fly more swiftly than the six winged Seraphim : finally thou didst far exceed every creature, for thy purity shone more than that of any other being, and thou didst receive within thee the Creator of every creature : him didst thou conceive and bring forth, and thus alone of all creatures thou didst become the Mother of God : therefore do I salute thee with these words,—Hail full of Grace" (1).

Thus the voice is ever the same whether heard from Alexandria, or Rome, or Je-

(1) In Deiparæ Annunt. N. 17.

rusalem. Let us now hear it from England and Constantinople.

8<sup>th</sup> Century. The venerable Bede, the great light and glory of the Church in England, says, commenting on the second Chapter of Luke :

“She is the Mother of God and hence indeed Blessed, because she was the temporal minister of the Incarnation of the Word : but much more Blessed is she inasmuch as, by love, she remained eternally united to Him.”

St. Germanus of Constantinople addressing our Lady says :

“In the same way that respiration is a sign of the life of our bodies, even thus to have often on our lips thy most holy name, to invoke it at all times, in all places and in every way, is for thy servants not only a sign of joy and help, but is also the cause which procures that joy, and secures that help.” And in a letter of his read and approved by the seventh General Council, held in the eight Century, he says, speaking of the propriety of making images of Christ and the Saints, and of honouring them :

“As properly and truly Mother of God

we offer her homage and extol her, and hold her to be superior to every visible and invisible creature."

9<sup>th</sup> Century. St. Methodius (Orat. de Simeone et Anna) thus breaks forth into words of praise: "Rejoice O Mother and handmaid of God; for He who is the Creditor of all is debtor to thee. We are all debtors to God, and he is indebted to thee." That is, because the Blessed Virgin gave her consent to the Incarnation, and from her our Saviour took flesh. And in the same oration: "But what shall I say to thee O Mother Virgin, O Virgin Mother? For the praise of her whose work is not human exceeds the power of man... In thee the Testaments and oaths of God to our Fathers received their glorious fulfillment; for through thee the Lord became the God of virtue in our midst."

10<sup>th</sup> Century. Instead of words we will again relate a fact of Church History which will speak as loudly as words. During the latter years of the ninth Century the Hungarians were converted to the Christian Faith. Their King, St. Stephen, built a most magnificent church



to God in honour of our Lady ; he chose her as the patroness of his kingdom, and the feast of the Assumption was named by him the day of our Great Lady. He called his people, " the Family of Mary," and on the day of the dedication of the church he solemnly besought our Lady to accept his offering, and to keep the nation under her special protection. He published an edict telling all to consecrate themselves to the Mother of God, and to call her, and to regard her as their Sovereign Lady. When the Emperor Conrad advanced against Hungary the pious King besought our Lady to guard her possession, and to let him, if he had been guilty, suffer, and not the innocent. His prayer was heard, for that very night the imperial troops withdrew and left the kingdom in peace.

11<sup>th</sup> Century. St. Peter Damian equally renowned for piety, zeal and learning thus writes : " How can the transitory word of a mortal praise her who bore the Eternal Word ? What tongue is worthy to extol her who bore Him whom all things bless, and with trembling obey ?... When we wish to write the praises of the Mother

of God we can find no words equal to the task, because that of which we treat is new and stupendous... The Creator is born of a creature! He who is not circumscribed by the vastness of all space is conceived by a Virgin!... Here, beloved Brethren, I ask you to consider how much we are indebted to the most Blessed Mother of God, and how many thanks we owe her, after God, for our Redemption. For that Body of Christ which the most Blessed Virgin bore, which she fondled on her knee, which she bound in swaddling clothes, which she fed with maternal care, that same Body, and I say it unhesitatingly, is none other than the one we now receive from the Altar, and whose Blood we drink in the Sacrament of our Redemption. This Catholic Faith believes; this the Church faithfully teaches" (1). We may observe that this magnificent passage gives testimony to the Catholic belief in the Real Presence.

St. Anselm of Canterbury says:

"That Virgin to whom God the Father had disposed to give his only Begotten

(1) Ser. 45 in Nativ. Virg.

Son whom he loved as himself, so that he might naturally be the common Son of God the Father and the Virgin,—that Virgin whom the Son elected to be his Mother,—that Virgin in whom the Holy Ghost was to operate the Conception of the Eternal Son,—it was becoming that that Virgin should be adorned with such purity that, after God, no greater could be imagined " (1).

12<sup>th</sup> Century. As is well known to many the writings of St. Bernard, who lived in this century, are filled with the praises of our Lady. Indeed some, who have never read the early Fathers of the Church, try to make it appear that he was the first to propagate devotion to the Mother of God. What we have hitherto drawn from their works is a sufficient reputation of this silly charge. St. Bernard only caught up the cry which had come down from God's promise in Eden ; he is a link in the chain of tradition, and a faithful exponent of the belief of his century. He says :

"The Blessed Virgin alone did more for God, or, at least, as much if I may so

(1) De Conc. Virg. N. 28.

speak, as God did for the whole human race. And I believe God will pardon me, if I now speak for the Virgin. Let us gather into one what God did for man, and let us consider what Mary has given to the Lord. In the first place God made man of the slime of the earth, but Mary gave a body for the Lord of her pure blood and Virginal flesh, which was the most precious thing in the world. Secondly, God imprinted on man the beauty of his own image ; but the glorious Mary gave him her image ; for even as she is the most beautiful of women, so Jesus is the most fair and beautiful amongst the children of men. Thirdly, God made man not obnoxious to hunger, thirst, cold and the like ; but the loving Mother of Jesus, more God loving than all others, provided for his necessities and protected him, with loving patience, as his state required, from hunger, thirst, nakedness, cold and heat." Thus he goes on drawing a parallel between what God did for man, and what our Lady did for the Incarnate God, and concludes : " Comparing, therefore, one with the other what God did for man, and what the Blessed Virgin did for God, you

will see that she did more for Him than he did for man " (1). After such words it is needless to quote further from this great Doctor. He could scarcely say more.

13<sup>th</sup> Century. Of all the mighty intellects which have shed a lustre on human nature that of St. Thomas of Aquinas, after Solomon's, is, perhaps, the greatest. Six centuries have only added to the honour which all cultivated minds must pay this mighty genius. His are the writings which will last forever, and will be forever honoured ; for they do not appeal to any passing passion, prejudice, or natural feeling ; they appeal to our intellectual nature. They are the cold, clear, logical reasonings of a master intelligence. Hence his words are of great importance ; for they are not the outbursts of a passionate rhetoric, nor the exaggerations of an enthusiastic disposition. They are the teachings of truth,—calm as the Gospel narratives, deep as the visions of the Prophets, and yet as intelligible as the ten Commandments. This is how he speaks of our Lady :

" The Blessed Virgin , inasmuch as

(1) Tom. II Ser. 6.

she is Mother of God, has a certain infinite dignity by reason of the infinite Good which is God ; and in this sense nothing better than she could be made, since there can be nothing better than God " (1). Yes ; to be Mother of the Incarnate God is surely the greatest dignity a creature could have. The reasoning is very plain, and, perhaps, startling to those who do not grasp properly the idea of the Incarnation. Again (Opus. 8 de Salut. Angel.) he says, that Angels often appeared to men, in the early ages of the world, and that men, such as Abraham for instance, were praised for showing respect to them. But never do we read of an Angel exhibiting reverence to a mortal until the " Angel reverently saluted the Blessed Virgin saying—Hail full of Grace." Then he shows why an Angel never before paid deference to man, because, viz., Angels are greater by *dignity*, by *familiarity with God*, and by the *greater fulness of divine grace*. Hence, until they found one who exceeded them in these three gifts, they should not show them deference. But, he

(1) 1 p. q. xxv Ar. 6 ad. 4.

says, the Blessed Virgin exceeded them in these things ; “ and as if to make it known the Angel shows his respect by saying,—Hail, full of grace,—as if he would say : on this account I reverence you, because you excel me in the fulness of grace.” In the same work he says :

“ The grace of God is given for a double purpose, to do good, and to avoid evil : and in this respect the Blessed Virgin had the fulness of grace, for she avoided every sin more than any saint after Christ. She, also, exercised the works of all virtues, whilst other Saints did some special ones. Therefore the Blessed Virgin was full of grace both as regards the doing of good and the avoiding of evil. ...In every danger you can obtain safety from the glorious Virgin. In every work of virtue you can have her for a helper.”

14<sup>th</sup> Century. But it was not alone holy ones, and Ecclesiastics who so praised our Lady. All great minds turned lovingly to her. One of the few great Poets who will never die,—one who in many respects was the greatest of them all, is Dante. Philosophy and Theology,

without losing any of their precise exactness, under the magic power of his muse, are sweetly blended into song in his great work—"La Divina Commedia."—In the 33<sup>rd</sup> Canto of Paradise, he opens with the following magnificent prayer of St. Bernard to the Blessed Virgin, on behalf of the Poet himself who guided by Beatrix, is present, and longs to look even to the throne of God. We could wish our translation were equal to the original.

"O! Virgin Mother, of thy Son a child,  
Most humble, yet above all others great ;  
In Wisdom's depths fixed object undefiled :  
Thou who, with wonderous gifts, didst elevate  
Man's nature so, that God approving smiled  
Disdaining not with human flesh to mate.  
Again was lit within thy virgin breast  
The Maker's love ; by its sweet ray, like flowers,  
These souls are born into eternal rest.  
Thou art, of Charity, in heavenly bowers,  
Meridian beam ; below, the fountain blest  
Of living hope in mankind's darkest hours.  
So great the power that from thy greatness springs  
O! Lady high, that he, who in his need,  
Seeks not thy help, would soar bereft of wings.  
Nor dost thou always stay a gracious deed  
Until invoked ; oft in dubious things  
Thou dost forestall a wish with loving speed.



In thee bright Mercy and sweet Pity shine ;  
In thee magnificence ; in thee are knit  
What shreds there are in others of divine.  
Wherefore this man, who from hell's lowest pit  
E'en to this place, has seen in ordered line  
The spirit world, now prays that thou wouldst fit,  
By grace from God obtained, his mortal eye  
To gaze aloft, unto the awful throne  
Of Him the source of perfect bliss Most High.  
And I, who never favour of my own  
More fervent sought than this, raise up my cry  
To thee, (and may it not in vain be thrown)  
That frail mortality's encircling cloud  
Thou wouldst with prayers dissolve, so to his gaze  
The cause of bliss might now his face unshroud.  
Lady, who canst, in God's mysterious ways,  
Thy every wish obtain, preserve, I ask,  
From ill, the senses that such things have seen :  
To quell his human pride, be thine the task ;  
Behold, Beatrix prays to thee, O ! Queen,  
And many Saints with outstretched hands for this.

Petrarch, another great Poet of the fourteenth century, shows his love for our Lady by writing in a letter to a friend : " Long ago I made a vow before Christ to set up an altar in my garden, between the river and the cliff, should my means permit, not to the nymphs or divinities Seneca wished honoured, but to the Virgin Mary, whose ineffable ma-

ternity has overthrown the altars and temples of all false gods." Amongst his poetical works is a most tender and beautiful poem to our Blessed Lady. A feeble translation of a few lines is offered. It begins :

" O Virgin fair, girt with the sun,  
Bright crowned with stars, thou hast so won  
The Eternal's love, that his pure light  
In thee was hid from mortal sight :  
Love led, I fain thy praise would speak,  
But words, alas ! are all too weak  
Without Christ's help and thine.

.....

Virgin pure, in all undefiled,  
Mother and daughter of thy Child ;  
Who wast to earth the joyous morn,  
And dost the other life adorn :  
Through thee, O ! window of the sky,  
Thy Son, and that of God most High,  
Shone on the world in latter days :  
And thou alone, O ! Virgin blest,  
Wast chosen from among the rest,  
Eve's grief to turn to joy always.

.....

Virgin, in whom is all my trust,  
Who canst and wilt in need show power,  
Fly not my couch in death's dread hour ;  
Not me, but my Creator see ;  
His image grand behold in me,  
And help me then a man of dust."

15<sup>th</sup> Century. St. Thomas of Villanova writes :

"Who is this woman proposed as an example for all, crowned with twelve stars, that is, ennobled and adorned with all graces, all gifts, all virtues? To other virgins grace is given in part, but the whole fulness of grace has been bestowed upon Mary " (1). Again he says : " Finally, all of which not merely human nature, but any pure creature is capable of having, all that was in the glorious Virgin. She it was who appeared to the world rising like the aurora, flowery, a glowing purple, joyful, not shaded, not darkened, not defiled like the other children of Adam, but beautiful as the moon, and bright as the sun."

It is not necessary to quote from authors of the last three hundred years ; there is no question about the teaching of Catholics regarding our Lady during these three centuries. We began with the Eternal Father speaking in Eden the praises of our Blessed Mother, and we have come down step by step, through

(1) Ser. 3 de Nativ. Virg.

Scripture and the writings of Saints and Martyrs, and other great ones, and we find the same voice, the same words of praise and loving respect which we now use. Our words are only an echo of theirs ; our hymns of praise are but the refrain of their glorious songs. Instead of one or two from each century we might have cited dozens. We took them indifferently from every part of the world ; they wrote in various languages ; but their words combine in teaching the same truth, and their voices blend in one harmonious strain. We might mention paintings and statues of our Lady, the works of the greatest artists from St. Luke to our own time ; and noble churches everywhere erected to God in honour of her. All these prove that the world was, and is, full of her praise. Those who believe in Christianity must surely see that Catholics alone are the true heirs to the glorious heroes of the early Church. The religion that mocks at the Mother of God, or slights her, cannot be the one instituted by Christ, and propagated by those who so revered and loved her.

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## PART SECOND.

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### PRACTICAL DEVOTION TO OUR LADY.

In the foregoing pages we have endeavoured to show, in as few words as possible, the greatness of our Lady, and the lawfulness and utility of devotion towards her. Without knowledge of a thing there can be no love for it; and the greater our knowledge of anything truly noble, the greater will be our love thereof. Hence our desire was to show how truly great and noble our Holy Mother is; to give the loving Catholic heart new reasons for affection, and arguments sufficiently simple in form, whilst invincible in strength, for defending her honour, and our devotion, against the thoughtless and misinformed. For these purposes we placed her before the reader in all the grandeur of her sublime

dignity of Mother of God ; the Eve of the second creation by grace ; the central figure, after Christ, in the wonderful mystery of Redemption. All this was illustrated and confirmed by the words of God and his holy ones. We saw how she was extolled in every age ; first by the Almighty in Eden ; then by Prophets and other Scripture writers ; then by the Angel sent from God, and by St. Elizabeth " filled with the Holy Ghost " ; and finally by great and holy persons in every age of the Church, and living under every sky. Thus her dignity and prerogatives were made manifest, and we were taught by the highest authority how really glorious she is. We saw, too, that she has been left to us by our crucified Saviour to be our Mother, and in this we have the sweetest pledge of her loving care. We are her children, made so by the blood of Christ, and commended to her guardianship by him when dying on the Cross. We have thus every motive for confidence in her intercession. And we can see, both from the teachings of Scripture when at her request Christ performed his first miracle, and also, from

the testimony of the Fathers, how powerful she is to obtain favours, and how ready to exercise her power. Thus are we led on to see how easily we can save our souls, if we be devout children of our loving Mother. God will refuse her no grace that she may ask ; and she will never, no never, refuse us, if we only be sincere in our demand. The lawfulness and utility of devotion towards her have been fully vindicated ; abundant reasons for loving her, next to God, have been given ; and motives for the most child-like confidence in her have been set forth. It remains now to point out how all this ought to influence our lives, keep us on the road of virtue, and finally be a means of bringing us to the eternal joys of heaven.

We are here in this world, exiles in a valley of tears. This is not our home ; we have no permanent dwelling here, but we seek a future one. How long we may have to remain we know not ; perhaps only for a very short period,—a summer day, and then ? Then, what ? Why, death ; death for us ; separation from friends, from brothers, from wife, from husband.



That separation will come ; it may be, in some cases, deferred for several years ; but still it will come ; like a thief in the night, and in the hour which we know not the Son of man will come. This night, perhaps, they will seek thy soul, and the things on which thou didst set thy heart whose shall they be ? An awful truth this death is ; an unsparing scatterer of our life long illusions. Acts that we strove to think honest ; sins that we hugged in spite of warnings and conscience ; the meanness of actions ; our spites ; our neglect of Mass and Confession ; the secret crimes to which we clung,—all these, O ! God, at that dreadful moment will be seen in their true light. Their deformity, and our miserable weakness in not shaking them off, will stand before us in all their hideousness. Our mind will be incapable of saying anything in our defence. It is true that whilst we are in life and health we sometimes succeed in deceiving ourselves regarding our actions. We see others careless and sinful ; we see the world following its pleasures and its vanities, unheeding of the words of the Creator ; perhaps, even, denying his exis-

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tence, or maintaining that there is no hell. We live in these surroundings and by neglecting the practises of our Religion, we begin to feel and speak like others. But the approach of death will cast a new light on our actions, and we will recognise the awful truth,—What will it avail a man to gain the whole world, and lose his own soul ! Men may say now as they said in the time of David, “ there is no God ” ; men may be wicked now as they were in the time of our Saviour, but what of that to us ? The eternal truth remains, that we have been created to know and serve God on earth, and then to see and enjoy him in heaven. The words of Christ are as binding as ever—“ Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with all thy strength, and thy neighbour as thyself.” This is what, at the point of death, we will wish we had done. Let us do it in life, so that for us death may have no terrors.

“ Blessed is he who heareth the word of God and keepeth it.” We have been taught the word of God ; have we kept it ? The Blessed Virgin did ; of all human beings she loved God most, and most

perfectly kept his word. She was ever sinless ; ever God loving ; ever intent on her duty ; ever pure in thought, word and deed. Therefore is it well for us and consoling, in this dreary world of trial and sorrow, to look up to her ; to think often of her ; to invoke her aid, and to imitate, inasmuch as we can, her example. The thought of her will lighten our load ; it will bring peace in suffering ; it will insure consolation in affliction ; it will give courage in adversity ; it will strengthen our good resolutions ; it will put sin to flight ; it will lead our souls to Jesus. These are not groundless assertions ; they follow as a consequence from her surpassing sanctity, and from her quality of Mother of God. For when we think of her, we must naturally think of her Divine Son to whom she owes her dignity and her power. This, too, as we have seen, was the teaching of the early Church. It is then both sweet and profitable for us to think frequently of our holy Mother, the Blessed Virgin.

The way in which we can best show our love and admiration of her, is to follow her example as nearly as we can.

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We were redeemed by the Blood of her Divine Son, and nothing can be dearer to her heart than to see us glorifying God by virtuous lives, and thus deriving benefit from the Passion of our Saviour. To bring souls to him is her glorious privilege and her chief delight. She is his and our Mother; we crucify him again by sin, but she goes to plead for us before his throne. An earthly mother tries to reconcile the quarrels of her children; and our heavenly Mother is anxious to make peace between her Divine Son and her human children. Hence she intercedes for us, and urges us to shun sin and to practise virtue. Now, since she served God so perfectly, she is an example to follow. It is true that Christ is our great exemplar; but as he is God as well as man we may, perhaps, think he is too far beyond our weak forces. But the steps of Mary follow in the footprints of Jesus; so if we imitate her, a mortal like ourselves, we will be on the safe and narrow path that leads to everlasting happiness. To keep her example continually before our eyes, and to strive to follow it, is the truest and most pleas-

ing honour we can offer her. It is, also, as we have seen, most conducive to our salvation.

Now then, dear reader, do you really wish to honour her whom God and all the holy ones of our Church have so honoured? Do you really wish to save that soul which was purchased by the Blood of the Lamb of God? Do you desire to avoid the many snares that beset your path, and to give love for love to God? Do you wish to bear patiently the ills of life, and to lessen its misery for others? If you wish to do any, or all of these, behold an easy way; imitate our Holy Mother, and seek, by some devout practise, her powerful assistance. Do not be under the delusion that saying the Beads, or wearing the Scapular, or performing some other act in her honour will save your souls, no matter how your life may be spent. Devotion to her is acceptable only when we are in earnest. We must, at least, have a wish, or desire, to do better, otherwise our devotion and honour are not real. Hence it is that the true test of our devotion is the measure in which we model our lives on hers. There-

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fore, keep her example ever before you. In the morning, after having said your prayers, recommend yourself fervently to God, and place yourself under the protection of our Lady. Then reflect for a moment on her manner of acting. In every stage of her life she did her duty, ever avoided sin, was ever full of grace. She was poor and lowly ; she had to work for a living ; she had to encounter all the hardships of a common life. But she never repined ; she never rebelled against God's holy will ; she never became impatient ; she never shirked any duty. As a child she was most obedient and loving towards her parents ; she never gave them cause for sorrow, or anger. In this, then, little children, imitate your sweet Mother Mary. During the day act as you think she would have acted.

As a young girl she was modest, retiring, God loving, kind-hearted and ever attentive to her work, or studies. O ! what a beautiful example for young girls. She was a bright mirror of purity,—that virtue which adorns a woman, and without which all her other qualities count for nothing. No lightness of speech, no unseemly be-

• haviour, was ever seen in our Lady. It is true that the customs of the time in which she lived, and, also, of the place, were different from ours; and young women did not mingle as much with men as they now do. But suppose that our Lady were alive now, and in this country, do you think she would be less modest, less pure? Surely not; for she was ever full of grace. Although, then, our manner of life is not the same, let young girls ask themselves, —“what would the Blessed Virgin do in this case?” The answer will be: she would not do anything that would bear the faintest suspicion of indelicacy, or in which there would be any danger of sin. Let them keep this thought before their minds when in company, and act up to it, and they will never give their heavenly Mother cause for blushing, or for tears.

As Mother of our Saviour, the Blessed Virgin fulfilled all her duties with loving care and promptness. In this she is an example to mothers. Let them try to imitate her in the bringing up of their children; in training them from their youth for God. Let them keep before their minds the house at Nazareth where

our Lady dwelt with Jesus, and teach their children to love that Saviour who was pleased to be a child like them : and teach them also devotion to his Mother.

Finally, as a human being who spent full seventy years in this world, and tasted deeply of its sorrows and trials, our Lady is an example of conduct for all, men as well as women. She has shown us what human nature, assisted by God's grace, can do, and how it can triumph. Her dignity was the greatest that a creature could have ; and yet she suffered more than any one in the world, except our Saviour. A young and tender mother, with a young child, she had to fly into a distant land. She knew her child was God as well as man, and that he could, by an act of will, save her and himself from danger. Still she did not hesitate to obey God's voice. See how heroically she bore her trouble. Think of her daily battle against poverty, and the ills of life, and see how she never wavered. How different is our conduct. A little trial casts us down ; a disappointment in business, or pleasure makes us



impatient. For a slight cause we will neglect our duty to God, and stay away from Mass. Our Lady to save the Divine Infant from the fury of Herod, bore all the hardship and miseries of a cruel flight : and men and women crucify him again, and make a mockery of him, rather than do a little violence to themselves ; rather than restrain some evil passion. They cling to some vice,—they go into occasions of sin,—they lead others into crime,—they live on, enemies of God, and enemies to their own souls, rather than take the slight trouble of going to Confession and following the advice they may receive. How brave, and generous, and self-denying was our dear Mother in serving God ; and how cowardly, and mean, and selfish we are. But our sins come, in a great measure, from want of thought. Let us, then, often think of our Blessed Lady ; not merely in the morning, but during the day ; and each time let us renew our resolution of imitating her example, and invoke her aid. If our souls are now black with sin, or if vices have taken root in our hearts, let us not be discouraged ; at once set to work by im-

ploring her intercession with God to obtain the grace of true repentance.

After having thus resolved to imitate our Lady, and to think often of her during the day, say with fervour a little prayer in her honour. We will give in another place some short practises of devotion ; let each one chose one of these, or some other, and *say it daily*, never, under any consideration, omitting it. This is of great importance. Let the prayer be short, if you will, but let it be daily during your life, and said with devotion, and a sincere desire of doing better. I give it as my own conviction that any one who will daily say three Hail Marys, or some other short prayer, in honour of our Lady, and with a true desire of leading a better life with the help she will obtain from God, will never die in God's wrath. Let no worry, nor trial, nor discouragement because of sin, make you omit the prayer. Even if your soul is reeking with guilt, say it, but say it with the dispositions above named. Imitate, then, the example of the Blessed Virgin ; think often of her ; desire sincerely to advance in virtue ; say some

prayer devoutly in her honour, and your devotion will be practical and of great benefit to your soul.

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## CHAPTER II

### THE SCAPULAR

If we attentively consider the dealings of God with man, we will see how poor and weak in appearance are the means which he generally uses for accomplishing great purposes. The rod of Aaron wrought wonders ; the walls of Jericho fell at the sound of trumpets and the shout of the people of Israel ; Naaman the Syrian general was cured of leprosy by washing seven times in the river Jordan ; to preach his Gospel our Saviour chose twelve poor fishermen ; to cleanse us from Original sin water is employed ; our Divine Saviour used spittle to restore hearing to the deaf, and a mixture of it with clay to give sight to the blind. In a word, God chooses the weak things of the world that he may confound the strong, as St. Paul tells us (1 Cor. I 27). The reason he does so is to humble the pride of man, and to let us see that he it is, and not human power,

or strength, or riches, that works wonders, and gives grace. He often makes use of men and things to accomplish his designs ; but they are only instruments in his hand ; the efficacy is from Him.

Notwithstanding this well known way of God's dealing with man, thoughtless people will laugh at some Religious practise because it appears weak, and out of proportion to the end desired. They forget that water of itself, has no virtue to cleanse us from sin ; they forget that the sound of trumpets of itself, has no power to overturn walls ; still God used them for these purposes. There are too many like the Syrian General Naaman. When he was first told by the Prophet Eliseus to wash seven times in the Jordan, he was angry, and was about to go back to his own country ; for it seemed so childish an action, and one from which a cure of leprosy could not take place. Are not, he said, the Abana, and the Pharphar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel ? " But his servants persuaded him to follow the advice of the Prophet. Their reasoning could be thought on with profit by many in our

own day. They said : " if the Prophet had bid thee do some great thing, surely thou shouldst have done it : how much rather what he now hath said to thee : Wash, and thou shalt be clean." (IV Kings c. v. 13). He had sense enough to see the force of their argument ; he obeyed, and he was cured. Thus it sometimes happens that when we are promised certain great benefits, if we perform some small act in honour of God, or of our Blessed Lady, people will be angry like Naaman was, and refuse to believe. Let them remember that the weak and foolish things of the world are chosen to confound the wise. It is with such a reflection as this that all ought to begin the consideration of the Scapular.

We have seen how powerful the Mother of God is, and how anxious she is for the salvation of her children. Through her, as we have seen, God is pleased to bestow his choicest favours on man. It is always well understood when we speak of favours, or graces from the Blessed Virgin that she is not the source of them ; she is the medium, or channel through which they come from God to us. Now the

graces to be obtained through the devotion of the Scapular are manifold. We will first explain what it is, and how instituted.

The Scapular consists of two pieces of brown woolen cloth, about three inches square, and attached by a double string, in such a way that it can be passed over the head, one piece of the Scapular being on the breast, and the other on the shoulders. It must be blessed and put on, for the first time, by a priest having the faculty of so doing. It is not necessary that the parts of the Scapular should touch the person ; but to gain the benefit of it, it should be worn, in the way described, night and day. When it has become unfit for use another is to be put on ; but it is not necessary to have the second one blessed. Through respect, it would be well to burn the one disused. This is the material part of the Scapular.

It is worn as a badge of the Blessed Virgin ; it is the livery, or uniform, of the Queen of Heaven. The soldiers of each nation have their particular dress, and carry the flag of their King. They are known to all by these ; so the devout

children of Mary are recognised by their badge the Scapular. Now we know that it is pleasing to God to profess him publicly ; it is likewise pleasing to him to honour publicly his holy ones. It is gratifying to men to be honoured in the eyes of their fellows. How anxious are persons to have something belonging to one they really love ; a handkerchief,—a glove, a lock of hair. And the owner of these is pleased to know that they are prized by the one who has them in possession. So it is with our heavenly Mother. She is delighted to see us openly devout to her ; wearing her badge ; professing our loyalty to her in the eyes of all ; because all this redounds to the glory of God. For, as before explained, we cannot honour her without honouring Jesus whose Mother she is. The honour we give her ends not with her, but is, so to speak, sent on to God, whose faithful servant and friend she is ; just as the respect we pay the Governor terminates not with him, but in the Queen from whom he has received his power. This is surely clear enough to any one who wishes to understand. If, then, the Blessed Virgin is pleased with



us for wearing her livery she will, since she can obtain all graces from God, bestow on us many favours. The friendship of God, or of his holy ones, is not barren ; it always shows and proves itself by conferring benefits. Hence, even if the wearing of the Scapular had not been ordered by our Lady ; even if it were merely a mark, in the eyes of the world, of our enrolment under her banner in fighting the battle of God on earth, it would certainly bring down on us many blessings. But it is more than an external mark by reason of its origin.

In the thirteenth century there was a holy man named St. Simon Stock, who had lived for years in a solitude, spending the time in prayer and meditation. He had a tender and childlike love for our Blessed Lady. After some years he became a monk of the Carmelite Order, and in England, his native country, he inflamed many hearts with great love for God. He was, also, ardent in propagating devotion towards our Lady. For a long time he had entreated her to show some mark of her favour. On 16<sup>th</sup> July 1251 she appeared to him holding a Scapular

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in her hand, and gave it to him saying :  
“ receive this Scapular of the livery of my  
Confraternity,” and she promised many  
graces to those who would wear it de-  
voutly. The holy Simon at once began  
preaching this devotion, and thousands  
were enrolled. Successive Popes granted  
many Indulgences to be gained, under  
stated conditions, by the members of the  
Confraternity. From this we can see how  
pleasing to our Blessed Mother is the  
wearing of the Scapular, and how many  
spiritual helps we can gain through this  
devotion. It is one which every person  
can practise ; there is no difficulty in  
being enrolled ; there is no hardship in  
wearing the Scapular ; no *prayers, or  
works, of any kind whatsoever* need be  
said, or done, specially for the Scapular ;  
and still we may partake of many, though  
not all, of its benefits. This should be  
well understood. Many are deterred from  
wearing the Scapular because they think  
it entails the obligation of saying regu-  
larly some extra prayers, or of fasting, or  
of going very often to Confession and  
Communion. This is a mistake. In order  
to gain what is called the *Sabbatine* pri-

vilege of the Scapular—that is, the being relieved in Purgatory by the prayers and intercession of our Lady, particularly on Saturday, the day consecrated to her by the Church,—to gain this, I say, it is necessary for those who can read to recite daily the Little Office of the Blessed Virgin; those who cannot read must abstain from flesh meat on Wednesdays and Saturdays, besides, of course, observing the fasts of the Church, and leading Christian lives. But one may be a good member of the Confraternity, and enjoy many of its privileges, of which we will speak, by simply wearing the Scapular devoutly. Therefore there is no reason why all should not be enrolled; there is no reason why all should not pay this mark of honour to the mother of God, and secure many blessings for themselves.

Now what are the advantages of the Scapular? They are manifold.

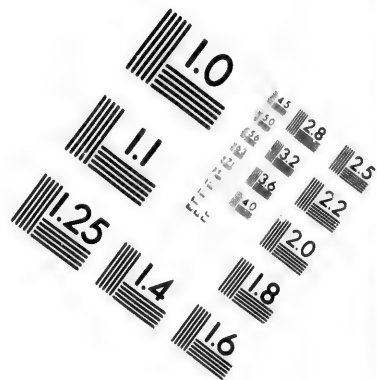
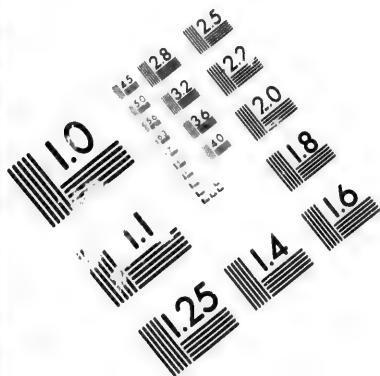
In the first place it leads one to think of our Lady, of her glorious example, of her great love for God, and it will help to make us resolve to imitate her. From this will at once follow a desire to lead better lives, and we will be urged on to

daily pray more, and with better dispositions. Again, the members of the Confraternity share, in a more special manner than the rest of the Faithful, in all the spiritual and meritorious works performed in the Church ; and in the good works of the Order of Mount Carmel, and of the Confraternity itself. Surely all these are great advantages.

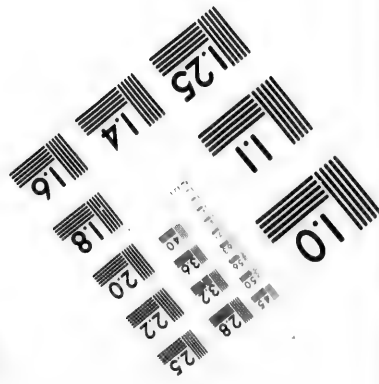
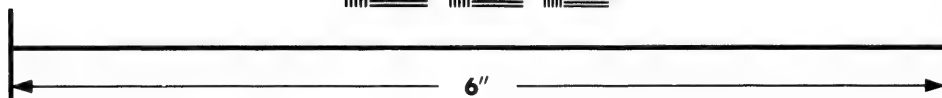
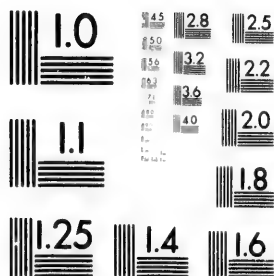
Then there is the special protection of our Lady. It is true that we are all her children, but those who wear her badge, and thus make a continual profession of their love, have special claims on her protection. Father Colombière has well said, speaking of those who wear the Scapular :

This homage which he continually pays to Mary, cannot fail to be pleasing to her, and it also serves to protect him from the attacks of his enemies ; their snares cannot surprise him, as he is constantly clad with that livery, the sight of which puts them to flight. This reason alone would be sufficient to induce the Blessed Virgin to take charge of the salvation of her adopted children."

How often does the flag of a strong

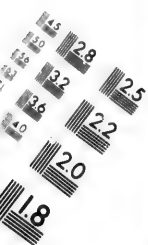


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nation waving over a house in a city taken by the enemy, save that house and its inhabitants, whilst all others are either sacked, or destroyed. And shall not the badge of the Blessed Virgin have as much effect over the enemies of our souls, as the flag of any nation over the enemies of our bodies? It is to be remembered that all these advantages can be gained by simply wearing the Scapular with devotion. The following Indulgences can also be gained :

*Plenary Indulgences.*

1<sup>st</sup> On the day of enrolment, or when first invested with the Scapular.

2<sup>nd</sup> On the Festival of our Lady of Mount Carmel, 16<sup>th</sup> July, or any day within the Octave.

3<sup>rd</sup> At the hour of death by devoutly pronouncing, or at least by saying in the heart, the holy name of Jesus.

4<sup>th</sup> On all the festivals of our Lord, on those of the Blessed Virgin, and the twelve Apostles.

5<sup>th</sup> On any two days in each week that one may choose. There are, also, other

Plenary Indulgences ; but these are the ones most easily to be attended to by the majority of people. In order to gain the above Indulgences, over and above wearing devoutly the Scapular, three things are required : Confession, Communion, and to visit a Church saying therein some prayers for the wants and intentions of the Church, according to the obligation imposed by the Pope in granting the Indulgences.

There are also many partial Indulgences which can be easily gained : the following are some of them.

1<sup>st</sup> Five years and five quarantines to those who receive Holy Communion once a month, and pray for the intentions of the Pope.

2<sup>nd</sup> Three hundred days for abstaining from meat on Wednesday and Saturday.

3<sup>rd</sup> One hundred days for reciting the Little Office of our Lady.

4<sup>th</sup> One hundred days each time a member gives alms, or performs any spiritual, or corporal work of mercy.

5<sup>th</sup> Forty days, once a day, for reciting seven Our Fathers, and seven Hail Marys,



in honour of the seven joys of our Blessed Lady.

All these Indulgences are applicable, by way of suffrage, to the souls in Purgatory.

It may be useful to add a few words regarding Indulgences, a subject not rightly understood by many outside the Church.

When we sin we contract a debt with God which has to be paid either in this world, or in the life to come. Even when we recover God's grace through the Sacrament of Penance, unless our contrition has been *perfect*, a thing, alas! which rarely happens, we still owe a temporal satisfaction to God. When the Almighty made known to David, through the Prophet Nathan, that his sin was forgiven, he still exacted a temporal satisfaction. By prayers and good works, and by patiently bearing the trials and sorrows of life, with resignation to God's will we can pay, in this life, the debt we owe to God. But too often this spirit of mortification is wanting on our part.

Now the Church which was founded for the salvation of souls, comes to the

help of our weakness. The infinite treasures of the merits of Christ ; the great merits of our Blessed Lady ; and the merits of the Apostles and Saints, are in her keeping. All power to bind and loose on earth was given to St. Peter and his lawful successors, the Popes. Hence the Pope, as Vicar on earth of Christ, out of these spiritual treasures confided to his charge, grants to those who perform certain good works, or say certain prayers, an Indulgence, either plenary or partial. Those who believe in the divine origin of the Church, and in the power of binding and loosing given to St. Peter, must see that the Church, or its supreme head on earth, can do this.

In the early Church it was the custom to impose very heavy penances, often public ones, in order to pay as much as possible of this debt due to God by reason of sin. The meaning, then, of an Indulgence of one hundred days, or five years, or forty days, is, that the person who gains that Indulgence has paid as much of his debt to God as he would have done by practising the ancient penances, for 100 days, or five years, &c., as the case

may be. Thus for some small good act he has, by reason of the Indulgence granted out of the treasures of the Church, paid so to speak, a large amount of debt. It is as if a poor man owed his King a large sum of money. He has but little to offer, only a few shillings. The Treasurer of the King who has the dispensing of his money tells the poor man to perform some act of respect and honour towards the King, and he will, out of the royal treasury, add several pounds to his shillings. The Church is on earth the Treasurer of the King of Heaven, and for small acts of love and honour towards him, supplies out of the merits of Christ and his holy ones, our shortcomings, in part, or in whole.

From this it can clearly be seen what the nature of an Indulgence is, and how it is dispensed. It does not remit sin ; it only remits some, or all, of the temporal punishment due to it. It does not give permission to sin, or tell us that we may live in iniquity, and then, without repentance, gain an Indulgence and go to heaven. No ; sin must be repented of first. We have said what a partial Indulgence

means ; a plenary one imports a full remission of all temporal punishment due to our past sins.

In order to gain either a partial, or plenary Indulgence we must perform exactly the work enjoined by the Pope. Moreover, we must be free at least from mortal sin to gain a partial Indulgence ; and to gain a plenary one in its entirety we must be not only free from mortal sin, but also from venial, and from all affection thereto.

Having thus seen the nature and benefit of an Indulgence, we hope that many will be induced to wear the Scapular, and endeavour to gain some, at least, of the above spiritual advantages.

We may briefly sum up what has hitherto been said in this Chapter. Everyone can wear the Scapular ; it is no trouble and no expense. Simply be enrolled once by a priest having the necessary faculty, and put on a new one yourself when the first is worn. Many benefits are acquired without saying one additional prayer ; if you do the works above mentioned, or say the specified prayers, you gain the corresponding Indulgence ;

if you omit the prayers, or works, you do not commit any sin ; you simply do not gain the specified Indulgence. In this, then, everything is in your favour, and nothing against you.

Moreover, by simply wearing the Scapular with devotion you offer a great act of homage to our Lady who will not fail to reward you. Perhaps she will lead you to think often of her, and excite in you a desire to imitate her virtues. Wearing her badge you will be more terrible in the eyes of the devil ; and as a special child of our Lady you will be more promptly and powerfully assisted. Delay not, then, to take advantage of this easy and powerful help in the battle for your salvation. Your soul once lost is lost forever ; dangers surround you on all sides ; passions are continually soliciting you to sin. Clothe yourself with the livery of our Lady of Mount Carmel, and she will shield you from many dangers. The cloak of Elias the Prophet twice divided the waters of the Jordan (IV Kings II). The shadow of St. Peter cured diseases (Act. V. 15). The handkerchiefs of St. Paul were efficacious in restoring health (Act.

XIX 12). What wonder, then, that the livery given by our Lady to her devout children should prove beneficial. She, as we have seen, is greater than Prophets, or Apostles, or Angels. It is only a weak and cowardly Faith, or no Faith at all, which admits the miracles performed by the cloak of Elias, the shadow of St. Peter, the handkerchiefs of St. Paul, and refuses to believe that the badge of the Queen of Heaven, the Immaculate Mother of the Crucified, is of any avail in our spiritual warfare. Let those who may be tempted to sneer remember that, according to the words of St. Paul, God hath chosen the weak and foolish things of the world to confound the wise : and let the devout of Mary have confidence in the power of the Scapular both in bodily and spiritual danger. Fires have been extinguished by throwing a Scapular into them ; musket balls have been stopped by it, and other wonders performed, as can be seen from works which treat at length of this devotion.

Hitherto we have only spoken of the Brown Scapular of our Lady of Mount Carmel. There are other Scapulars to

which many Indulgences are annexed. There is the Black Scapular of our Lady of the seven Dolors, and the Blue one of the Immaculate Conception. But as our object is chiefly to write for the instruction and guidance of the mass of Catholics, we detail the advantages of the one more commonly worn. Those who desire a knowledge of the other Scapulars can consult works which treat of them, or they can obtain information from their Priest. From the same sources they can acquire a knowledge of the Scapular of the Sacred Trinity, and that of the Passion of our Lord and of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary. All these Scapulars are to be received for the first time from a Priest having the faculty of blessing them. They are to be worn in the same manner as the Brown one. All, except that of the Most Holy Trinity, can be renewed by the wearer without ceremony, or blessing. The Scapular of the most Holy Trinity must be blessed as often as it is renewed.

## CHAPTER THIRD.

### THE BEADS.

Another form of devotion most pleasing to our Lady is that of the beads, or Rosary. It is an old custom in the world to offer garlands of flowers as a token of love, or respect. Amongst the ancient Greeks the bride, during the marriage ceremony, was crowned with flowers. After the introduction of Christianity, or rather together with the preaching of the true faith, devotion to our Lady took root. We have already proved this by the words of illustrations and holy writers of every age, and every clime. Statues and pictures of her adorned the homes of the faithful, and occupied conspicuous places in the churches. Then as now devout souls used to weave wreaths of flowers and place them, as offerings of love, on her altar, or before her image.

In the fourth century, St. Gregory of Nazianzum substituted for these garlands



and wreaths, a crown of prayers. He composed a beautiful series of short sentences narrating the praises and glories of our Lady. And yet we are told that devotion to her is of modern growth in the Church. A century later St. Bridget, in Ireland, took a new departure. The prayers written by St. Gregory were beautiful and full of tender love ; but they were unknown to the people in Ireland, and in many other places. There were, however, prayers more beautiful than these, and known wherever the Christian Religion was taught. They were the Our Father, and Hail Mary. St. Bridget substituted these for the words of St. Gregory, and introduced a custom that had been in use amongst the hermits of Thebaid, that viz., of stringing together bits of wood, or stone, by which to count the number of Our Fathers and Hail Marys. About the beginning of the thirteenth century St. Dominick, at, as it is asserted, the suggestion of the Blessed Virgin herself, preached with force and constancy the devotion of the Rosary. The present form of the Beads, and arrangement of mysteries commemorated

in the Rosary, are from him. By his zeal in propagating this form of devotion it spread rapidly, and brought with it many graces and blessings.

Nor could it be otherwise, as can easily be concluded by considering the nature of the Rosary, which consists of fifteen mysteries in the life of our Divine Saviour, and of his holy Mother. After repeating the first mystery, or thinking on it, you say the Our Father once ; then ten Hail Marys and Glory be to the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, &c. Then you repeat, or think on the second mystery, and say Our Father, ten Hail Marys, and Glory be to the Father, &c., and so on to the end. Usually, however, the Rosary is divided into three parts, containing five mysteries each, and this is generally called the Beads, or Chaplet. Saying the Beads, then, consists in meditating on some great mysteries connected with our Redemption, or in the life of our Lady, and in repeating the prayer which Jesus Christ himself taught, and the one made by the Archangel Gabriel, St. Elizabeth, and the Church. It is, therefore, a most excellent form of devotion ; it is a bright

and pleasing spiritual crown offered to our Lady in order that she might obtain from God for us, by her intercession, an eternal crown of glory in heaven. As it is said in her honour, we repeat the Hail Mary many times oftener than the Our Father.

To say the Beads you begin by blessing yourself ; many then say the Creed, but this is not necessary ; you can at once begin by the first mystery, of the Joyful, Sorrowful, or Glorious mysteries, according to the day of the week. Trying to keep your thoughts on the mystery read, or recalled to mind, repeat Our Father, once ; Hail Mary, ten times ; and Glory be to the Father, &c., once. Do this after each mystery until the five have been said. You have recited the Beads in a most profitable manner. Those who cannot read, or who cannot meditate, may say devoutly the Our Father and Hail Marys. It is a most simple and beautiful form of devotion, and once the habit of saying the Beads daily has been acquired one feels a perfect pain in omitting them.

A missionary named Michael Fuentes

was travelling in Peru with five persons of that nation. A storm coming on, they sought refuge in a cave beneath a huge rock. The priest, taking out his Beads, knelt down and invited his companions to join in offering this tribute to the Queen of Heaven. Two of them did so, but the other three stood watching the storm. Suddenly a vivid flash of lightning fell from the clouds and instantly killed the three who were not praying; the priest and the other two were uninjured. Events of this kind, which are not unusual if we only gave heed to them, ought to teach us a lesson. Some may say,—“It was only by chance that the three were killed.” Apart from the fact that there is no such thing as chance, it would still be better to be killed whilst praying than while carelessly neglecting it. In any case those who will recite devoutly the Beads will bring down many blessings on themselves, and avoid many dangers.

In order to induce the Faithful to practise this charming devotion of the Rosary, the Church has placed many Indulgences within their reach. Beads are Indulged

by the Pope, and by Priests having the faculty for that purpose. The Indulgence can only be gained by the person for whom they were Indulged, or to whom they were first given after the blessing. They should not be sold after being Indulged; and whether sold, or given, as a free gift, after having been used, they lose the Indulgence. By merely loaning them to another, without any desire, or intention of transferring to him the Indulgence, they do not lose it for the owner.

To gain the Indulgence of the Beads it is necessary:

1<sup>st</sup> That they be Indulged by one having the power.

2<sup>nd</sup> That five decades be recited without a notable intermission.

3<sup>rd</sup> To meditate on the mysteries as you proceed; those who cannot do so may say them with piety.

The following are some of the Indulgences which may be gained. Whoever says five decades of the Rosary *once a week* can gain a Plenary Indulgence on each, or any of the following days by going to Confession and Communion,

and praying for the extirpation of heresy and Schism, for the spread of the Catholic Faith, for the peace and concord of Christian Rulers, and for the other necessities of the Roman Church: On Christmas, Epiphany (Old Christmas) Easter, Ascension Thursday, Pentecost Sunday, Trinity Sunday, Corpus Christi; also on 2<sup>nd</sup> February, 25<sup>th</sup> March, 15<sup>th</sup> August, 8<sup>th</sup> September, 8<sup>th</sup> December; also, on 24<sup>th</sup> June, 29<sup>th</sup> June, 30<sup>th</sup> November, 25<sup>th</sup> July, 27<sup>th</sup> December, 21<sup>st</sup> December, 1<sup>st</sup> May, 25<sup>th</sup> August, or on 24<sup>th</sup> where the feast of St. Bartholomew is celebrated on that day; on 21<sup>st</sup> September, 28<sup>th</sup> October, 24<sup>th</sup> February, 19<sup>th</sup> March and 1<sup>st</sup> November..

Here is the wealth of the merits of Christ and of his Holy Mother thrown open to us under easy conditions. We can procure these spiritual riches for our souls without money, without hard work, without fasting. By saying the Beads properly, even once a week, and by approaching the Sacraments and saying a few prayers for the purposes above mentioned, we can acquire every one of these Indulgences during the year. If we do

not wish to acquire all, we can gain some of them. All who desire to lead a truly Christian life should go to Confession and Communion several times a year. For the greater convenience of all the mysteries of the Rosary are here set down in a few words.

### JOYFUL MYSTERIES.

*For Mondays and Thursdays.*

1<sup>st</sup> The Angel Gabriel announces to our Lady the Incarnation of Jesus.

2<sup>nd</sup> The Blessed Virgin visits her cousin St. Elizabeth.

3<sup>rd</sup> Our divine Saviour is born in a stable at Bethalem.

4<sup>th</sup> Our Lady presents her beloved Son in the Temple.

5<sup>th</sup> Our Lady, having lost her Son, after three days finds him in the Temple.

### SORROWFUL MYSTERIES.

*For Tuesdays and Fridays.*

1<sup>st</sup> Our Saviour praying in the garden sweats Blood.

2<sup>nd</sup> Our Saviour is cruelly scourged in Pilate's house.

3<sup>rd</sup> Our Saviour is crowned with thorns.

4<sup>th</sup> Our Saviour is forced to carry his Cross.

5<sup>th</sup> Our Saviour is nailed to the Cross on Mount Calvary.

### GLORIOUS MYSTERIES.

*For Sundays, Wednesdays and Saturdays.*

1<sup>st</sup> Our Saviour rises on the third day after his Crucifixion.

2<sup>nd</sup> Our Saviour ascends to heaven forty days after his Resurrection.

3<sup>rd</sup> Our Saviour, seated at the right hand of God, sends the Holy Ghost on his Apostles.

4<sup>th</sup> The Blessed Virgin is assumed into heaven.

5<sup>th</sup> The Blessed Virgin is crowned in heaven by her Son.

May those who read these pages be moved to a true devotion towards the Queen of heaven. Think how much we owe her ; how much she loves us ; how



many times, perhaps, she has assisted us without our knowing it. She is all love and tenderness for her weak children. If you are in sin, ask her to obtain you the grace of true repentance ; ask her to lead you before the throne of Christ and to plead for you. No matter how great your sins may have been, if you are now resolved to amend your life, go to her with confidence and ask her to help you to return to your heavenly Father. If you are held by some bad habit of sin ; if the demon of impurity has got a mastery over you, O ! fly to this powerful protectress. Beseech her to help you to free yourself from a sin which brings shame, misery, and often an early death, in this world, and which merits eternal torments in the next. Put yourself under her guardianship ; offer to her your eyes, your ears, your tongue, your senses, your whole body, praying her to watch over them, and to guard them from the power of Satan. In return, recite the Rosary every day ; do not think it is too much ; ten minutes a day is not much to give for all you will receive. At least say part of it every day, never, on any account omitting

it. Many good Catholics observe the pious practise of saying the Rôſary in their families. This is a most praiseworthy custom. If it were introduced into every household all would soon grow to love it, and it would bring down many blessings on all. We cannot be perfectly happy in this life, but most persons could be happier than they are. A true devotion to our Lady brings with it many lights and graces ; it stills our bad passions ; it fills us with hope and a holy joy. This is the peace of the children of God on earth. Taste and see how sweet it is.

#### CHAPTER IV.

##### MONTH OF MAY, AND OTHER DEVOTIONS.

Time is but a preparation for Eternity ; this life is a season of labour and trial by which, with God's assistance, we can fit ourselves for the never ending happiness of heaven. We are not in this world to gratify our passions, to live in idleness, —to gather riches, or to acquire honours. It is an old truth, but still it is the truth, that we are here to love and serve God

and to save our souls. Some, who either never had any Religion, or wilfully lost what little they had, try to forget and to deny this great truth. Living like beasts, knowing no law except their pleasure and convenience, they fear a God although they disown him, and they fain would believe that in death they will be like the beasts whose lives they imitate. It is too true that many human beings are, in life, little different from dogs ; often not half so useful, and certainly more disgusting in the sight of God. Still, they have an immortal soul. They shall die, but the soul will live, and it shall have to appear before its Creator whom it denied with its lips, and whose laws it transgressed by its actions. It is this thought which leads many, who are too indolent to rise from sin, to strive to quiet their fears by saying there is no God, or that there is no punishment for the wicked. Others again are so taken up with the things of life that they never reflect on God, nor on a future state. All their toil and care is for the present. They will labour day after day for riches they must soon leave behind ; for pleasures that turn to pain ;

for honours that take wing in a night. These latter are not bad after their own fashion. They are often kind hearted, ready to assist a friend, good neighbours and honest. But all this is not enough. They must look beyond this world, and learn to work for the riches of heaven.

Between those who are bad themselves and who try to make others deny God, and the class of careless good-natured people who work only for this life, the world presents a rather mournful appearance. Those who wish to be virtuous are jostled against the sinful and negligent. The atmosphere of books and newspapers is often poisonous, and the daily intercourse with easy going, good natured wordlings, renders the practise of virtue very difficult. We are so easily led by circumstances; our frail nature is so prone to evil; the example of the many is so powerful, that it is not to be wondered at, that many lose the full brightness of Faith, and the keen reverence for Religion, and religious observances, which they once had. On all sides the rush and hurry of life is for the attainment of material objects. The battle

cry of the world is—"gain the goods of this life at all costs," and,—“lay up the stores of this world.” How different from that awful question asked by our Divine Saviour: “What doth it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?” (1) These words are never heard in the stir and bustle of life. But they ought to be the watchword of all true Christians. They should ever sound in our ears. Treasures in heaven we should lay up, where the moth doth not consume, nor thieves break in and steal. The perversity of some, and the carelessness of others ought not to affect us. If they chose to disregard the warning of our Saviour, we should not; if they live only for this world, we should live for heaven. We have our own souls to save. Both they and we shall one day stand before the Judgment Seat of God, when their teaching and example will not save their own souls, nor excuse our sins. Time and opportunity have been given us; and our Holy Church teaches us how to use our time profitably, and how to take advan-

(1) Math., XVI-26.

tage of our opportunities. To this end she has instituted various feast days, and is ever busy with the glory of God. She teaches us to give part of each day to our Creator ; to begin and end it with prayer ; to sanctify, in a more special manner, Sundays and Holydays. We are reminded of the virtues and glorious example of the Saints, and invited to imitate them, by the recurrence of their festivals! We are called to honour our beloved Mother, the Queen of Heaven, on her numerous feasts throughout the year, and a whole month,—the month of May,—has been consecrated to her by the pious practice of the Faithful. It is well understood that it is always to God we are to offer supreme worship ; him we should adore at all times and in all places : but this does not prevent us from having one month in the year dedicated, more specially than the others, to the honour of our sweet Mother. We are not forgetting God by this ; we are rather drawing closer to Him ; for it is ever to be borne in mind that true devotion to our Blessed Lady leads to Jesus. The more we honour and love her ; the more we reflect on her

life ; the more we strive to imitate her example, the more will we grow in holiness and purity of heart ; and, as a consequence, the nearer will we approach to God.

Hence the devotion of the month to May is a powerful help on the road of heaven. During the latter part of the last century some pious persons in Italy, lamenting the excesses committed by many during that joyous spring month, conceived the idea of dedicating it to our Lady, hoping thus to induce those who were spending it in dissipation, to pass it in a more christian manner. The idea soon took root, and the devotion of the month of May became a mighty instrument for good. The substance of this devotion consists in performing every day, during the month, some special act of devotion towards our Lady. Hence it may be followed either in public, or in private. Where convenient, it is much to be desired that it should be celebrated in the church. The usual way of carrying it out is to assemble the congregation in the evening, beginning on the last day of April, and continuing till the first night

of June, or at least until the last of May. A picture of our Lady surrounded with lights and flowers, when convenient, should be placed over the altar. A short instruction might be given, or a chapter read from some book of May devotions ; then the Rosary with the Litany of Loretto. This latter, as well as some short hymn to our Lady, could be sung. On some evenings Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament might be given. Each pastor can, of course, choose what form of devotion he considers most beneficial to his people, and best adapted to the circumstances of his mission. The devout of Mary ought to make it a point to go to Communion frequently, or at least once, during May. On the last night all might repeat aloud the act of consecration to Mary given below, or some similar act.

Where persons cannot attend May devotions at the Church, they ought to practise it in their families. A small picture of our Lady might be hung up in a room which the love of children to their dear Mother should adorn as well as possible. Let the family assemble each evening in that room and recite the



Rosary, or at least say the Litany of Loretto, together with some other short prayers. Or a chapter from some work of devotion might be read, and the act of consecration to our Lady repeated. They should, also, make it a point to go to Confession and Communion during the month. Those who may be away from home and, perhaps, living among non-Catholics can, nevertheless, honour our Blessed Mother each day, either by reciting some additional prayers, or reading something about her, or by saying the Beads. Think how much she will give in return for a month passed in her honour. Many a soul has she wonderfully helped for one small act of homage ; what will be her assistance for a daily act devoutly performed for a month.

Whenever convenient during May, visit the altar of our Lady, and ask her to assist you in the great affair of your salvation. Try to do all your actions so that they may be pleasing in her most pure sight. Often during the day exclaim : "O ! Mary conceived without sin pray for us who have recourse to you." If you are innocent, remember that your inno-

cence is exposed to great danger ; put it under the guardianship of our Lady, beseeching her to watch over it, and to guard it as her own. If you have sinned and wish to repent, invoke the aid of our Lady ; you are weak but she is strong ; you are poor and needy, but she is rich in God's love, and in the power of obtaining her requests. Beg of her then to take up your cause, and to help you to return to Jesus. If you are assailed by temptations, invoke her sweet name : if you are in sorrow, address yourself to her loving heart. During her life, but more particularly at the foot of the Cross, she drank the chalice of bitterness. She knows what grief is ; she knows what it is to have a heart wrung with the greatest of afflictions. Go then with confidence to her and tell her your trouble ; seek her aid to enable you to bear with resignation your sorrow. Remember that as the night of her great grief passed away, and gave place to the joy of the Resurrection of her Divine Son, so, too, the darkness of your sorrow shall give place to the light of peace, if you imitate her in your suffering. Acquire during the month of May

devotion, love and confidence. Continue afterwards the pious practises thus acquired ; and with childlike trusting have recourse to our Lady in all your wants.

For the convenience of our readers we subjoin a short consideration for each day of the month of May. It is translated and condensed from the Italian of F. Muzzarelli S. J. . After having read the words for the day attentively, and reflected on them, say some short prayers, or the Litany, or the Beads. Many will find it an excellent form of devotion to continue during the year.

#### FIRST DAY.

You have great need of Mary on the road to heaven. If you are innocent, your innocence is in danger. More virtuous than you have fallen, and are damned. If you are on the road of repentance your way is difficult, and your perseverance uncertain. Bad habits, occasions of sin, companions with whom you used to sin,—all these make your path one of danger. Invoke the aid of Mary ; she will bring help to your soul.

If you are still in sin, how great is your need of her. She is the refuge of sinners: when you tried to rise from sin before and failed, you did not put yourself under the patronage of this loving Mother. Now by devoting this month to her service you can gain her protection. But beware how you use it. Perhaps you will never see another. (*Say 3 Hail Marys, Litany &c.*)

## SECOND DAY.

My soul, thou art in the world to save thyself. Thou art not here for pleasure, or wealth, or pastime, much less art thou here to sin. What will it benefit thee to gain the world and lose thyself! Kings and Emperors, and men of learning, what have your power and knowledge availed you, if you are now in hell!

But the affair of salvation is uncertain; salvation is not bought with gold; it is acquired by doing violence to our passions, and by keeping God's law. My past life has been one of sin with feeble efforts at conversion. And yet the soul once lost is lost forever. All other losses

may be repaired, but that one never; through all eternity there will be no remedy. O ! Mary my mother help me to save my soul. (*Say 3 Hail Marys, Litany &c.*)

## THIRD DAY.

Consider, my soul, how precious thou art. Thou didst come from the hands of God ; thou art made to the image of God. Ah ! how little dost thou think of thy nobility, and how readily dost thou defile, by sin, the image of God, and take upon thyself the appearance of the devil. My soul, thou wast lost, and lost without possibility of redemption through thyself. Thou hast been redeemed ; not with gold and precious stones, but with the Blood of the Lamb of God. What return dost thou make for that ? Sin ; yes, thou repayest thy Saviour with sin.

God has prepared a throne for thee in heaven ; thou art a child of the most High and an heir to Paradise, made such by Baptism, but hast thou remained such ? Alas ! perhaps thou art wallowing in the filth of sin, forgetful of thy dignity and of

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the happiness of the just. O ! Mary free  
me from my passions, and enlighten me.  
(Say 3 *Hail Marys*, *Litany* &c.)

## FOURTH DAY.

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of God.  
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Why dost thou sin? Is it to gratify  
thy passions? Dost thou not see that  
thou art ruining thy body, for if the soul  
is lost the body will be lost likewise?  
Either both must be happy, or both mi-  
serable. Remember, if the body is damned  
every nerve and fibre will suffer. Now a  
slight headache, a hard bed, an uncom-  
fortable seat, a badly cooked dinner,  
causes you annoyance and pain. What  
will it be to endure torments in every  
part of your body?

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Now, my soul, thou art anxious about  
the appearance of the body ; but it will  
soon die ; a bare skull, without eyes, or  
lips or tongue : fleshless hands and feet,  
dust and worms,—this is all that will  
remain.

When solicited by the flesh to sin re-  
member what that flesh will soon become,  
and how it will be punished if lost. Say  
then to Mary: O ! Mary Immaculate

cleanse my heart and my body. (*Say 3 Hail Marys &c.*)

## FIFTH DAY.

Time passes rapidly and I pass with it. Fifteen, twenty, thirty, forty years of my life are gone and will never return. How many more remain? I know not ; I only know that time is short, and that Eternity is never ending.

Time is short, and how precious ! For in this short time I can obtain an everlasting happiness. Every moment well spent will increase my glory in heaven. A half an hour passed in reviewing my soul and confessing my sins, can liberate me from the power of the devil, and replace me in God's favour.

Time is short, and yet how dreadful ; for at any moment I may sin, and die in my iniquity, and lose my soul. Me foolish to have spent my days in sin and folly, instead of in God's service. O ! Mary Immaculate keep me always on the road to heaven. (*Say 3 Hail Marys &c.*)

## SIXTH DAY.

Hast thou ever sinned? If so, what

hast thou done? Listen : thou hast striven to destroy thy Creator, thy Father, thy Redeemer, thy God, thine all. What ingratitude and enormity. Thou didst lose the grace of God, and the privilege of adoption, the merits of thy past life, and the heirship of heaven : from heaven thou didst hurl thyself to the brink of hell! : and this for a vile passion.

And art thou still in sin? Poor soul! dost thou know what it is to be an enemy of God? Thou dost laugh, and amuse thyself, and sleep; but if God should weary of thy sin, in a moment thou art dead and damned. Think of thyself in time, and repent.

If not in sin, perhaps thou art in danger of falling. Be on thy guard, the Angels sinned; Adam sinned in Paradise; Judas sinned in the school of Christ. Watch and pray if thou wouldst be safe. O! Mary keep me from mortal sin. (*Say 3 Hail Marys &c.*)

## SEVENTH DAY.

God can punish the sinner if he wishes.  
Man cannot always avenge himself, but



God can. He can take away thy health, thy possessions, thy friends, thy life ; he need only will it. If now thou art in sin he can punish thee with a sudden death ; he need only will it. Dost thou know his will ? Thou dost not ; and yet thou wilt sin, and sleep tranquilly.

God certainly will punish sin ; he must have satisfaction either here, or hereafter. Either repentance, or hell. Even now it may be God is punishing thee. Misfortunes, sickness, hopes deluded, are perhaps punishments for forgotten sins. But if things go well, and thou dost feel no remorse, it may be that this is the greatest punishment of all. Woe to thee if thou hast lost all fear of God and of his wrath. O ! Immaculate Mother of God pray for such. (*Say 3 Hail Marys &c.*)

#### EIGHTH DAY.

I must die ; I must leave my friends, my goods, my pleasures, everything,—even my body. The grave will be my dwelling here ; and eternity my house beyond ; shall it be good, or bad ? Death is a truth that we can believe without

the light of Faith ; experience teaches it. Some die old ; some die young ; some are rich, some poor ; some good, some bad,—but all die.

But where shall I die ? Or how ? Shall it be in bed, on the road, at sea ? I know not. I may linger for months ; I may die after a short sickness ; I may be suddenly cut off. I know I must die, but how, or when I know not. And yet I live as if I should never die ; I never think on death, neither do I try to prepare for it. Were I to die at this moment how would it be for me ? Do I see my soul in sin and leave it so ? O ! my God no ; I will at once repent. O ! Mary protect and defend me at the hour of death. (*Say 3 Hail Marys &c.*)

## NINTH DAY.

I must appear before the judgment seat of Christ. How shall I present myself ? He was my Father and I did not love Him ; he was the Spouse of my soul and I abandoned Him ; he was my God and I despised Him. With one glance I will then see all my sins. Shall I then

turn to Mary? But how? It will be too late: my Angel guardian will be 'unable to help me. The devil whom I served will be my accuser.

On the day of judgment all my sins will be laid bare, if not blotted out by true repentance. What avails it to keep them now from my friends and my confessor, if all will know them then? I will receive a sentence: I shall either be blessed with God, or cursed with the devils. Which sentence do I wish? I shall get the one which my actions deserve. O! Immaculate Mary preserve me from the judgment of wrath. (*Say 3 Hail Marys &c.*)

#### TENTH DAY.

Dost see, O sinner, that gloomy prison of fire and smoke? It is prepared for thee if thou dost not repent and amend. Dost see that fire? Within it, body and soul, thou wilt burn if thou diest in thy sin. The pains of that awful prison house will penetrate and rend every member of thy body. Now thou canst not hold thy finger for an instant in the flame of a candle. Think of that.

If thou art damned, thy anguish will be increased by the thought that thou couldst so easily have saved thy soul and did not ; and that for a few miserable pleasures thou wilt have to suffer an eternity of torments. O ! my soul think of this. Forever, and ever and ever to suffer ; never, never, never to know peace or rest ; that is what thou wilt gain by sin ; that thou canst avoid by leading a Christian life. O ! Mary, my Mother, preserve me from the pains of hell. (*Say 3 Hail Marys &c.*)

## ELEVENTH DAY.

Look down, my soul, into the infernal pit, and count the number of damned before the coming of Christ. That one there is Cain : of two brothers, one saved and one damned. That immense multitude there are those who lived at the time of the Flood : one family saved, and all, or nearly all the rest lost. That other group are the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah. See how many from every nation of Antiquity, even from that of the Jews.

See that crowd there in such an agony of despair. They are those who saw Christ, who heard his teachings, who witnessed his miracles, but who refused to leave their sin and to believe. But saddest of all, see the number there who fill that place of terror with their cries of woe. They are Christians; Christians washed in the Blood of Christ, fed on his Sacraments, beloved once by him, but yielding to their passions they fell into sin, and disregarded the voice that called them to repentance. See them now, and seeing so many, strive to live with those who walk the narrow way. O! Mary help me to live with the elect. (*Say 3 Hail Marys &c.*)

## TWELFTH DAY.

What more couldst thou do to save me, O! my God? Even I cannot say. When thou callest me with the voice of mercy, I continue to sin presuming on thy goodness: if thou showest forth thy justice, I sin on, despairing of pardon. If thou dost move my heart to tenderness, I offend again; if thou dost threaten, I

still offend. One moment I bathe the Crucifix with tears of compunction, and the next I reopen my Saviour's wounds by my sin. I can scarcely fathom the depth of my own malice.

What remains for thee to do, O! my God? Thou hast nourished me in the bosom of thy Church; thou hast given me lights to know, inspirations to move me to good, graces to resist evil, Sacraments to strengthen me, examples to encourage me, afflictions to recall me to my senses. Notwithstanding all this I sinned; thou couldst have punished, but thou didst spare me, whilst others less guilty were cut down. Thy Blood was shed, thy body torn and mangled for me, and there is ever prepared for me the Sacrament of thy love. O! my soul surely thou wilt not continue to offend thy God. O! Mary, hail; our life, our sweetness and our hope. (*Say 3 Hail Marys &c.*)

## THIRTEENTH DAY.

The sin of scandal is very great. What has each soul cost our Saviour? It cost him ignominies, stripes, torments most

cruel, the Cross ; it cost him all his Blood ; it cost him his life. And thou for so little dost rob him of a soul, perhaps of many souls ! Thou dost render useless for that soul his Sacred Passion. Thou art like the devil who was a "murderer from the beginning." From thy childhood, perhaps, by words, by looks, by persuasions thou hast treacherously killed innocent souls.

The sin of scandal is a fruitful source of iniquity. That sin which thou hast caused another to commit is thine ; all the sins afterwards committed by that soul, which had their origin from thy counsel and teaching, are thine. For years, yes, perhaps, until the end of the world, sin will be committed by reason of thy teaching, or persuasion. Thou didst lead one into sin ; that one led another ; that other another, and so on it may go forever. O ! soul, if thou hast torn others from Christ repent at once ; strive to bring souls to him for these which thou didst lead astray. Cease to be the cause of sin in others. O ! Mary help me to atone for my past scandal. (*Say 3 Hail Marys &c,*)

## FOURTEENTH DAY.

At times thou dost wish to amend, still thou remainest in sin. Why? Because through a false shame thou wilt not leave bad companions and occasions of sin; through miserable weakness thou wilt still go to the same places, and frequent the same company. Thus dost thou fear more the laugh of the bad than the anger of God. *Thou art ashamed to be good.* Thou art ashamed to quit the company of the idle and vicious; and thou art ashamed when with them not to join in their indecent pastimes. O! God is it possible that a soul can be ashamed of being virtuous?

Sometimes thou dost long to be holy, but yet thou art ever the same. Why? Because thou art ashamed to go often to Confession and to practise acts of piety. But remember that whosoever is ashamed of Christ before men, of him will Christ be ashamed before his Father in Heaven. Let others do as they will, but do thou save thy soul. O! Mary Mother of God, pray for us sinners. (*Say 3 Hail Marys &c.*)



## FIFTEENTH DAY.

What pleases thee most in life? Is it beauty, knowledge, glory, harmony, the possession of wealth? All these wilt thou have in Heaven. The light of God's glory will shine around thee; thou wilt see the beauty of God, and thou wilt be beautiful thyself. Seeing God thou wilt become wiser than Solomon, and have more knowledge than all the learned of the earth. The glory of God's Kingdom will be thine, a glory far beyond the wildest dreams of the mightiest King in this world. And that glory will never have an end. The eternal song of praise of the Angels will fall on thine ear, and thy joy will be perfect. The kingdom of God will be thy possession forever. Surely all these are worth working for. In a short time they will be ours, if we only do God's will on earth. O! Mary, gate of heaven, pray for us. (*Say 3 Hail Marys &c.*)

## SIXTEENTH DAY.

There are only two ways to heaven,—the way of innocence and the way of re-

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penance. What hast thou done with  
thine innocence? Hast thou got it still,  
or didst thou lose it years and years ago?  
Perhaps thou didst cast it away without  
even a tear, or a sigh. If it is gone, one  
of the two ways is closed.

There remains the way of repentance.  
What have I done for my sins? Have I  
been really sorry for them? Have I con-  
fessed them properly, or have I been  
foolish enough, and bad enough to con-  
ceal some? For me who have sinned  
there is only the road of repentance to  
heaven. A good sincere confession is ne-  
cessary; a true sorrow, and a firm resolve  
to amend. Help me, my God, to have  
these; help me on the only road that is  
now open for me; help me to repent. O!  
Immaculate Mary draw me after thee.  
(*Say 3 Hail Marys &c.*)

## SEVENTEENTH DAY.

Devotion to our Lady is most effica-  
cious, because she is the Mother of God.  
Hence we may reasonably say that she has  
in her hands the treasures of the grace  
and mercy of her Son: for what can  
Jesus deny to a Mother so holy; to her  
e-

who nourished, and guarded, and cared for him ; to her who followed him to the foot of the Cross, and then to the sepulchre ? Mary's love for Jesus was greater than that of all others ; and will not Jesus love Mary more than any other ?

It is a sweet and tender devotion, because she is our Mother. The Blessed Virgin is my Mother ; how sweet to say, —my Mother is the Mother of Jesus ; the Mother of Jesus is my Mother ! Jesus and I are children of the same Mother ! Our Blessed Lady bestows her favours with maternal sweetness : She is not satisfied with merely hearing our requests ; she speaks to our heart and often makes us cry with compunction.

She is the Mother of Sinners : they crucified Jesus ; still she loves them if they are desirous of repenting. Her Mother's heart rejoices when she can reconcile these two brothers, her children, viz., Jesus and the sinner. If you are in sin you can give joy to your Mother by at once seeking pardon from Jesus. She will intercede for you, if you sincerely ask her. O ! Mary, Mother most amiable, pray for us. (*Say 3 Hail Marys &c.*)

## EIGHTEENTH DAY.

In whose presence are you now ? God's. And when you walk, or work, or sleep, or talk, or eat, in whose presence are you ? In God's. And when you sin, in whose presence are you ? In the presence of an angry God. He is everywhere ; knowing all, seeing all, measuring all your thoughts, and actions, and words, and passions. By day and night ; in company and in solitude, this allknowing presence of God is around about you. Do you think to sin without a blush because no one sees you ? Ah ! God sees you always.

What pride, what disrespect, what madness to sin in the face of a God so holy and powerful. To sin under the eyes of your Redeemer, your Father and your Judge. He will one day be " Judge and witness " against you. Remember now his holy presence and sin not, and then you will not fear to stand before his judgment seat. Turn towards us, O ! Mary, thine eyes of mercy. (*Say 3 Hail Marys &c.*)

## NINETEENTH DAY.

Decide for once honestly ; whom dost thou wish to serve ? God or the devil ? Reflect on it, because thou canst not serve both. It is impossible to serve two masters so opposite to one another as God and the devil. One day praying with Christ, wearing his Cross, and the next sporting with the devil, clad in his livery of sin and shame : a few prayers, a mass, an abstinence, and then sinful actions and unholy desires ; this is serving the devil and mocking God.

If thou wilt serve God the suffering will be brief, and the joy everlasting. Fifty, or seventy years of trial, and then happiness forever. But a good life will bring many joys even in this world ; it will not be all suffering. But if thou wilt serve the devil, the pleasure will be short, and the torment eternal. For how long did sin ever make thee happy ? Who serves the devil has a few moments of pleasure here with much pain, and undying pain hereafter. Whom wilt thou serve ? O ! Mary, I am thy child, protect me. (*Say 3 Hail Marys, &c.*)

## TWENTIETH DAY.

Dost thou really wish to lead a better life? Thou wilt answer; yes, certainly. When wilt thou begin? Today? Alas! I am afraid thou wilt say; "O! I should so wish to begin at once, but I cannot today; I am so weak; I cannot abandon that company just yet; I cannot conquer my passions. I shall wait a little; when I am older I will surely amend. Perhaps next year I will go to confession."

Thus dost thou play with thy salvation. Neither the past nor the future is thine; only the present. How canst thou stake thy future happiness on the chance of repenting next year? or even to-morrow? How many Christians are in hell because like thee they delayed their conversion. Be advised whilst there is time and repent at once. Jesus, Mary and Joseph I give you my soul and heart. (*Say 3 Hail Marys &c.*)

## TWENTY-FIRST DAY.

Thou dost sin, and dost not go to confession at once. If thou art sick, at once

the doctor is called. Can it be that thou dost set greater value on bodily health than on that of the soul? If thou wert to die in thy sin, misery would be thy portion for an endless eternity. And, still, thou dost defer thy confession until the vice has grown into thy very bones and has become a habit. Easter time comes and then thou dost confess, but how long art thou in grace? Unless death should come on thee at Easter time thy chances of heaven are slight!

Perhaps thou wilt say, or the devil will say it through thy lips; "I have tried to do better; I have gone to Confession, but I have always fallen back." But why didst thou fall back? Listen: because thou didst not follow the advice of thy Confessor. For a few days, or weeks, his instructions were attended to, and for that time thou wast free from sin; but then they were neglected and the devil again took possession of thy soul. Make a sincere Confession and obey the advice received, and thou wilt not fall. O! Mary Mother of divine grace pray for us. (*Say 3 Hail Marys &c.*)

## TWENTY-SECOND DAY.

The Blessed Eucharist is the Sacrament of God's love. In it Christ becomes my friend, my guest, my Spouse; he refreshes my soul with his body and blood; he transforms me into himself. My breast becomes more holy than the Church, the altar, or the Chalice; my soul might be called a Paradise then, for the King of glory dwells therein.

But see how I dishonour Him. I approach that Sacrament with coldness; I go away quickly; I make scarcely any acts of thanksgiving; I never visit him in the Church, even when I could easily do it: I behave improperly in his presence in the Church. Perhaps, O! God, perhaps I have dared to receive him while in mortal sin, and like another Judas betrayed him with a kiss. I can get all grace I need in that Sacrament, grace to overcome my passions, to resist temptations, to lead a holy life. Therefore I will go often to Confession and Communion, and repeat.—Hail, most holy and true body born of the Virgin Mary. (*Say 3 Hail Marys &c.*)



## TWENTY-THIRD DAY.

God calls us to love him by inspirations and in various ways. Now by a powerful impulse and a lively knowledge of eternal truths; now by advice in private, and by public teaching; now by good books, and now by awful punishments of men and nations which many disregard. Sudden deaths, unrest of soul, the example of the good, all cry out,—“Change thy life of sin to one of love for God; O how sweet it is to serve God.”

God calls us, but we are left free to obey the call. The Holy Ghost is light that enlighteneth, is dew that renders fruitful, is a physician who heals; but he only cures those who desire it; he softens the hearts that open to him, and enlightens the souls that do not shut their eyes to his light. God calls us; and woe to us if we do not respond to the call. St. Mathew the moment he was called by Christ, arose and followed him; St. Peter at one glance from our Saviour repented of his fault and burst into tears. Let us imitate their example and answer

at once the call of God to love him. Teach me O! holy Virgin, to do God's will. (*Say 3 Hail Marys &c.*)

## TWENTY-FOURTH DAY.

Some will say,—“Oh! it is no great harm; it is only a venial sin;” but an offence against God is never to be made little of. A God so great, a Father so good, a Redeemer so merciful should never be offended wilfully; it is base ingratitude. One venial sin is a greater evil than the destruction of the whole world.

To commit a slight sin in a hasty moment, or almost without thought is one thing; but to deliberately commit venial sins, to offend God rather than be found out, rather than deny yourself, surely this is something very different. Moreover, we fall little by little. If we go on deliberately committing venial sins without striving to amend, we will, in all probability, soon fall into mortal. We must guard against them. O! Immaculate Mary cleanse me from every stain. (*Say 3 Hail Marys &c.*)

## TWENTY-FIFTH DAY.

Does a soul suffer in Purgatory? Ah! yes, it suffers in a fire kindled by divine justice. The soul in Purgatory loves God, and is punished by him; it desires to see him and it cannot: it longs for the time of its deliverance, and it knows not when it will arrive: it suffers torments greater than those of the world, but it gains no merit by them, for they are the punishment due to past sins. Would you like to be shut up in a prison? No; and yet you may go to Purgatory.

Why do souls go to Purgatory? For little sins, and for the temporal punishment due on account of mortal. A very slight fault, unless atoned for in life, condemns one to Purgatory. What then for all the lies, angry words, disobedience, want of respect in Church, vanity of dress, idle words and innumerable other faults, to which you pay no heed, and which you do not try to correct? Be wise in time; satisfy now for your sins by prayers, good works, and proper reception of the Sacraments, lest you should have to suffer years and years in Purga-

to: Pray, also, for those who are suffering there now. Virgin most powerful pray for us. (*Say 3 Hail Marys &c.*)

TWENTY-SIXTH DAY.

O ! my soul, think of the Infant Jesus. What is wanting for his comfort? Everything ; for a house, he has a stable ; for a bed, a cold manger ; there is no fire to warm him ; the breath of two animals supplies its place ; instead of warm blankets he has the torn cloak of St. Joseph. Jesus so poor, and I so fond of every comfort, and dissatisfied if I have them not !

Think of the mortification that divine Infant is practising. His delicate body is cold and hurt by the coarse straw ; still no cry escapes him, no tear glistens in his eye. See his humility : in the silence of the night, in an obscure place, he chose to be born. He is first known to rude shepherds ; he lives a poor and lowly life. O ! my soul, think of this and try to be poor of spirit and humble of heart. O ! Mary show to us thy sweet Infant Jesus. (*Say 3 Hail Marys &c.*)

## TWENTY-SEVENTH DAY.

Jesus as he grew up was obedient always to Mary and Joseph. The Son of God obedient to two creatures ! And in what ? In all the most lowly works of daily life, working, sweeping sawing ; so much so that he was thought to be the son of a carpenter ! And he obeyed with joy and promptness.

Jesus was always at work, or at prayer : he was never idle ; by this he taught us to fly idleness which is often the occasion of sin. He appeared to grow in wisdom and holiness, to teach us that as we grow in years so we should grow in the grace of God. Keep the example of his life before you, and increase daily in virtue, obedience and usefulness,—O ! Mary be thou my Mother. (*Say 3 Hail Marys &c.*)

## TWENTY-EIGHTH DAY.

Christ retired to the desert for forty days and forty nights. He had no reason to fear the snares and temptations of the world, nor danger from companions. Still, he left the city and went to the

wilderness. And I, weak and easily led into sin, why do I always seek company and noisy conversation?

Jesus in the desert teaches me to mortify my senses. He neither ate nor drank for forty days, and took his short rest on the bare ground. Still he was innocent, and could not sin. I who have sinned very often will never retire to pray; I think it hard to fast a little, to deny myself a little pleasure. I stay away from Mass for a very slight inconvenience, and refuse to abandon the practise of drinking liquor unnecessarily. Christ teaches me prayer and mortification; shall I not learn from him, and bring graces to my soul? O! Mary guard my tongue from sin. (*Say 3 Hail Marys &c.*)

## TWENTY-NINTH DAY.

See, my soul, the goodness of God in Jesus crucified. The Father sacrifices his only Son, and the Son sacrifices himself for thy salvation. One drop of that divine Blood was sufficient to save thee; but his loving goodness resolved to shed it all. Not only that, but he bore blows,

spits, scourges, blasphemies, a crown of thorns and cruel nails. He loved more than all others, and on that account he is the most despised of all.

See, my soul, the justice of God in Jesus crucified. Why is the Son of God condemned to so ignominious a death? For the sins of the world. They are not his sins, but he took them on himself, and must atone for them. He is innocence itself, but he has assumed the sins of others, and for this is he crucified. O ! my soul, learn from this that although God is infinitely good, he is also infinitely just. Christ died for thee ; but woe to thee if thou dost make all his sufferings vain in thy regard. Thou wilt be left to the stern justice of God. O ! Mary imprint on my heart the wounds of my Saviour. (*Say 3 Hail Marys &c.*)

#### THIRTIETH DAY.

Consider, O ! my soul, thy loving Mother at the foot of the Cross : three things in particular gave her great grief. First, to lose a Son the most amiable and innocent imaginable. To see him transfixed,

bleeding, dying in the prime of life in cruel torments, between two thieves. And for whom did he suffer? For thee, who perhaps wilt, through thine own fault be damned, thus rendering these torments useless in thy regard.

The second source of great sorrow was to see that the Blood of her divine Son would be shed in vain for so many Christians; for Christians who would make of it their accuser on the day of judgment. To lose Jesus and not to save these was indeed cruel anguish. The third, was to know the abuse which many Christians would make of that saving Blood,—sinning with greater confidence because it had been shed for them. And to know that many would blaspheme it, and some receive it unworthily. O! Mother of sorrows how bitter thy anguish, and how cruel and hard my heart if I do not weep at the thought of it. O! Mary make me weep with thee. (*Say 3 Hail Marys &c.*)

## THIRTY-FIRST DAY.

Our hearts are made to love God. How often we allow our affections to turn from him! How seldom do we think how



really lovely he is. Our Saviour is God and man ; as man he is the "most beautiful among the children of men ;" and as God his beauty is infinite. We love often a watch, a carriage, a picture, because they are pretty. And Jesus,—Jesus is not loved.

Jesus loves us, and yet we do not love him. From all eternity he loved us. For us he shivers in a manger ; for us he lived in poverty ; for us he bore insults and torments ; for us he shed his Blood. Is this small proof of love ? To him it seemed small, for he left us himself, his Body and Blood, to be the food of our souls, and to be a continual pledge of his immense love. We love a dog that greets us with joy,—but Jesus is not loved. Perhaps you think it is too familiar to say,—“O ! Jesus I love thee.” Ah ! no, it is not. Say it often ; say it with confidence ; say it with a full loving heart. This is what he wishes. If you are in sin, he calls you to love him ; quit your evil ways ; turn to him and say,—“henceforth O ! Jesus I will love thee.”—O ! Mary, kindle in my heart a great love for Jesus. (*Say 3 Hail Marys, Litany &c.*)

AN OFFERING OF THE HEART  
TO MARY.

Devout children of our Blessed Mother should frequently make an offering of their heart to her, praying her to guide its affections to Jesus. Your heart is not safe in your own keeping ; therefore give it in charge to the Mother of God to be preserved for her divine Son. At the end of the May devotions it ought to be made by all ; the priest reading it aloud, and the Congregation repeating it after him. When there is no opportunity of making it in the church each one can read it at home. It would be desirable for all to receive Communion on that day, and thus to offer a pure heart to our Immaculate Mother. It may, however, be said at any time.

## ACT.

Most holy Virgin, Mary Mother of God, I, *N...* although a most unworthy sinner, prostrate at thy feet, in the presence of the Almighty and of the whole heavenly court, present and offer to you my heart with all its affections : I consecrate it to

you, and I desire that it should always be yours and your beloved Son's. Accept, O ! most loving Mother, from your poor servant this devout offering united with the heart of all the Saints, and grant that from this moment I may begin and continue to live solely for you and for your most holy Son my God and my Lord. With his divine help, and with your loving assistance, I hope to do this, and I promise, on my part, to do it. Between your two hearts, O ! Jesus and Mary, place my poor heart so that it may be inflamed with your most pure love ; so that filled with this fire on earth, it may burn with eternal love for you in heaven in company with the Angels and Saints. Amen.

## CHAPTER V.

### LITANY OF LORETTO AND OTHER PRAYERS.

For the convenience of those who may wish to profit by this little work, and to daily, or at least very frequently, perform some act of devotion in honour of our Lady, we deem it well to subjoin the Litany of Loretto, and various other prayers. Each one can thus find at hand a short practise of devotion. Some of these prayers are for special purposes, such as the obtaining, or preserving of purity, the grace of true conversion to God, &c. Say some one, at least, of these prayers every day of your life.

### LITANY OF OUR LADY OF LORETTO.

We fly to thy patronage, O Holy Mother of God, despise not our petitions in our necessities, but deliver us from all dangers, O glorious and Blessed Virgin.

Lord, have mercy on us.	Christ, most graciously
Christ, have mercy on us.	hear us.
Lord, have mercy on us.	Lord the Father of hea-
Christ, hear us.	ven, have mercy on us.

God the Son Redeemer  
of the world, have  
mercy on us.

God the Holy Ghost,  
have mercy on us.

Holy Trinity one God,  
have mercy on us.

Holy Mary, pray for us.

Holy Mother of God,

Holy Virgin of Vir-  
gins,

Mother of Christ,

Mother of divine  
grace,

Mother most pure,

Mother most chaste,

Mother inviolate,

Mother undefiled,

Mother most amia-  
ble,

Mother most admi-  
rable,

Mother of our Crea-  
tor,

Mother of our Re-  
deemer.

Virgin most prudent,

Virgin most venera-  
ble,

Virgin most renown-  
ed,

Virgin most power-  
ful,

Virgin most merciful,

Virgin most faithful,

Mirror of justice,

Seat of Wisdom,

Cause of our joy,

Spiritual vessel,

Vessel of honour,

Vessel of singular

devotion,

Mystical Rose,

Tower of David,

Tower of ivory,

House of gold,

Ark of the Covenant,

Gate of Heaven,

Morning Star,

Health of the weak,

Refuge of Sinners,

Comfort of the af-  
flicted,

Help of Christians,

Queen of Angels,

Queen of Patriarchs,

Queen of Prophets,

Queen of Apostles,

Queen of Martyrs,

Queen of Confessors,

Queen of Virgins,

Queen of all Saints,

Queen conceived  
without original  
sin,

Pray for us.

Pray for us.

Pray for us.

Pray for us.

Lamb of God who takest away the sins of the world, spare us O ! Lord.

Lamb of God who takest away the sins of the world, hear us O ! Lord.

Lamb of God who takest away the sins of the world, have mercy on us.

Pray for us O ! holy Mother of God.—That we may be made worthy the promise of Christ.

A DAILY PRAYER FOR THE VIRTUE  
OF PURITY.

Mary, Virgin most holy, for love of thee I am resolved this day not to consent to any impure thought. Virgin most chaste help me to banish it at once. (Say : Hail Mary, once.)

Mary, Virgin most holy, for love of thee I am resolved this day not to say any improper word. Virgin most chaste purify my tongue. (Say : Hail Mary, once.)

Virgin most holy, for love of thee I am resolved this day not to commit any improper action. Mother most chaste grant that in everything I may please thy most pure heart. (Say : Hail Mary, once.)

SALVE REGINA.

Hail, holy Queen Mother of mercy, our life, our sweetness and our hope. To

thee do we cry poor banished sons of Eve ; to thee do we send up our sighs, mourning and weeping in this valley of tears. Turn then, most gracious Advocate, thine eyes of mercy towards us, and after this our exile is ended, show unto us the blessed fruit of thy womb, Jesus. O ! most clement : O ! most pious ; O ! most sweet Virgin Mary. Pray for us O ! holy Mother of God ; that we may be made worthy the promise of Christ.

## MEMORARE.

Remember, O most holy Virgin Mary, that it has never been known that any one who had recourse to thy patronage, who had implored thy help, who had sought thy assistance, was ever abandoned. I, animated by this confidence, fly to thee, O Virgin Mother of Virgins ; to thee I come ; before thee a weeping sinner I present myself ; beseeching thee to adopt me as thy child, and to take the care of my salvation on thee ; despise not my words, O ! Mother of the Word, but propitiously hear me, and have regard to my petition.

## CANTICLE OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

After the Incarnation of our divine Saviour the Blessed Virgin, as we are told in Scripture, went to visit her cousin St. Elizabeth. The aged and holy Elizabeth, filled with the Holy Ghost, proclaimed our Lady "blessed among women" and said: "Blessed art thou that hast believed; because those things shall be accomplished that were spoken to thee by the Lord." The Blessed Virgin desirous of giving the glory of everything to God, burst forth into this beautiful Canticle, as related by St. Luke (C. I, 46). It is Mary's hymn to God, and Mary's children ought to repeat daily their Mother's prayer.

"My soul doth magnify the Lord;  
And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my  
Saviour: Because he hath regarded the  
humility of his handmaid; for, behold,  
from henceforth all generations shall call  
me blessed. For he that is mighty hath  
done great things to me: and holy is his  
name. And his mercy is from generation  
to generations, to them that fear him. He  
hath showed might in his arm: he hath



scattered the proud in the conceit of their heart. He hath put down the mighty from their seat, and hath exalted the humble. He hath filled the hungry with good things : and the rich he hath sent away empty. He hath received Israel his servant, being mindful of his mercy. As he spoke to our Fathers, to Abraham and to his seed for ever."

PRAYER TO OBTAIN THE GRACE OF  
SINCERE REPENTANCE.

Virgin most holy, Mother of God, secure refuge of sinners, to thee who, after God, art our hope and consolation in this place of exile, I turn with entire confidence. I know on the one part the great need I have of a true repentance of heart ; and on the other, the enormity of my sins terrifies me. Therefore have I recourse to thee who art our great mediator with thy Beloved Son Jesus, who is our supreme mediator with his Eternal Father. My amendment must be thy work after that of Jesus. Deign then O ! Mother of Mercy, to obtain for me the grace of a perfect and enduring repen-

tance. I do really wish to change my life. My will is sincere, but my bad habits, the abuse which I have made of so many salutary inspirations and graces, the multitude and enormity of my sins, and the snares of life, render my conversion difficult, and require a most special help. Despite my unworthiness I hope for that from thee ; do not refuse it to me. Mindful of the torments of hell I throw myself at thy feet in sorrow and repentance. I confess that by my iniquities I have lost the divine grace, the grace of adoption as a child of God, and all right to the heavenly Kingdom, and have brought upon myself instead the anger of God : tell me thou what I should do to regain the friendship of thy Son Jesus. Pray to him for me that through his most Precious Blood, his cruel Passion and death upon the Cross, he would deign to pardon me my innumerable sins ; and He will pardon me. Tell Him that thou dost desire my salvation, and He will save me. But lest I might fall again into sin, and lose the life of grace in the many dangers that surround me, do thou always protect me ; and then I will be sure to triumph over

the enemies who continually seek my ruin. Obtain for me a lively faith, a firm hope, and an ardent charity, together with all the other Christian virtues that belong to my state of life, a stability in good, and final perseverance. In fine, be my loving Mother during life, and my special Advocate at the hour of death, so that I may be of the number of those to whom thy Son Jesus will say: "Come ye blessed of my Father, possess the Kingdom prepared for you." Amen. (3 Hail Marys.)

TO OUR LADY, AFTER COMMUNION.

O! most mild and glorious Mother of our Lord Jesus-Christ, Mary ever Virgin, Queen of the world, who wast worthy to bear in thy most holy womb the Creator of all things, whose most sacred Body and Blood I have received, be pleased to intercede with Him for me a miserable sinner; so that whatever may have been wanting on my part towards this holy Sacrament, either through ignorance, or negligence, or irreverence, or accident, may be pardoned through thy prayers by Christ our Lord. Amen.

RECOMMENDATION OF ONESELF TO  
OUR LADY.

O! Mary my Lady ever holy, I commend, today and every day, and at the hour of my death, my soul and body to thy blessed care, and special guardianship, and to thy bosom of mercy; to thee I commit all my hope and consolation, all my trials and miseries, my life and the end thereof; so that by thy holy intercession and merits all my actions may be guided and directed according to thy will and that of thy beloved Son. Amen.

## PRAYER OF ST. AUGUSTINE TO OUR LADY.

O! Blessed Mary, who can give thee due praise and thanks, for the benefit thou didst bestow on a lost world, by thy consent to the Incarnation! What praise may the frailty of the human race, which through thy instrumentality alone found a way of recovering what it had lost, pay thee? Deign, however, to accept our slight acts of thanksgiving, all unworthy as they are of thy merits; and when thou hast received our offerings, obtain

by thy prayers, pardon for our faults. Graciously present our supplications to the throne of mercy, and bring back to us the kiss of reconciliation. May that which we offer through thee, be made acceptable through thee: may that which we ask with a firm faith be obtained; accept what we offer; give what we ask; overlook our want of confidence, because thou art the great hope of sinners. Through thee we hope for the remission of sins; in thee is our blessed expectation of reward. Holy Mary, help the afflicted, strengthen the faint hearted, comfort the weak, pray for the people, interpose for the Clergy, intercede for the devout female sex: may all those who celebrate thy holy commemoration experience thy loving assistance.

## CHAPTER VI.

### FOR LITTLE CHILDREN.

Jesus loves little children ; he once said : “ suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the Kingdom of God.” See then, dear children, how much our Blessed Saviour loves you. He, too, was a little child, at one time, although he was, also, the great Lord and God of all. For love of us he became a little child ; he was born on a cold wintry night. He had no nice warm room, no pretty cradle in which to lie ; he had no rich clothes to cover him, and no servants to wait on him. He could have had all these if he wished, for he was God, and Master of all the riches of the world ; but for love of you, and to teach you that it is no sin, nor disgrace to be born of poor parents, he was pleased to be born in a cold, rough stable, and to be laid to sleep in a manger on coarse straw. And when he advanced in years he was still poor, and always for love of

you. But Jesus loved with a great and mighty love his holy Mother, the Blessed Virgin. Although he was God as well as man he was obedient to her, and never gave her any reason to be displeased. In this he teaches you how you ought to act towards your parents ; you ought to love and obey them, and never give them cause to be angry.

You ought, also, to love the Blessed Virgin. Our good Jesus, when he was dying on the Cross, left his holy Mother to be the Mother of all of us. She is in heaven next to her beloved Son, and he who loved her so much on earth, will not refuse her what she may ask in heaven. As she is then your heavenly Mother you should ask her to help you to be good ; to pray for you to Jesus. She loves little children, too ; when you pray to her, she will think of the Infant Jesus and what he suffered for your sake, and she will, if you are in earnest, assist you to avoid sin. Every day say some little prayer in honour of your sweet Mother in heaven : try to please her as Jesus did ; try to love her as he did. Here is a little prayer for morning and evening.—

## FOR THE MORNING.

Sweet Mother of my Saviour mild  
O turn thine eyes on me ;  
In mercy hear a little child  
Who trusting prays to thee.  
Dark sin walks forth o'er all the earth,  
And seeks our souls to kill ;  
But thou, who watched me since my birth,  
Be my protection still.  
Through thee mankind from death was bought,  
And Satan's power destroyed ;  
Through thee sprang One with mercy fraught  
My Jesus crucified.  
Then, Mother, guard me well this day ;  
My passions all restrain ;  
Drive sin and sorrow far away ;  
My heart with grace inflame.  
O ! pure and taintless Virgin dove,  
From sin forever free,  
I ask through thy maternal love  
To keep me pure like thee. Amen.

## FOR THE EVENING.

Bright star that shines with purest light,  
Clear, beautiful and fair ;  
Our joy, our hope, our guide by night,  
Dear Mother hear my prayer.  
Now darkness round the earth is thrown,  
And dangers walk abroad ;  
But thou, O ! guard me as thine own,  
Pure Mother of my God.



And grant that ever as each day  
So swift goes gliding by,  
With trust my heart to thee may pray,  
And thou to help be nigh.  
Now, ere my eyes in slumber close,  
Join thou thy voice with mine,  
To offer, pure as budding rose,  
A prayer to God's shrine.  
Thus ever on a loving child  
Thine eyes maternal keep ;  
My Mother, Mary, Virgin mild,  
Watch o'er me while I sleep. Amen.

Now, dear children, grow up in love  
for God ; think often on Jesus who loves  
you ; and every day of your lives say  
some prayer in honour of the Blessed  
Virgin, asking her to help you to gain  
heaven.

THE END.

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